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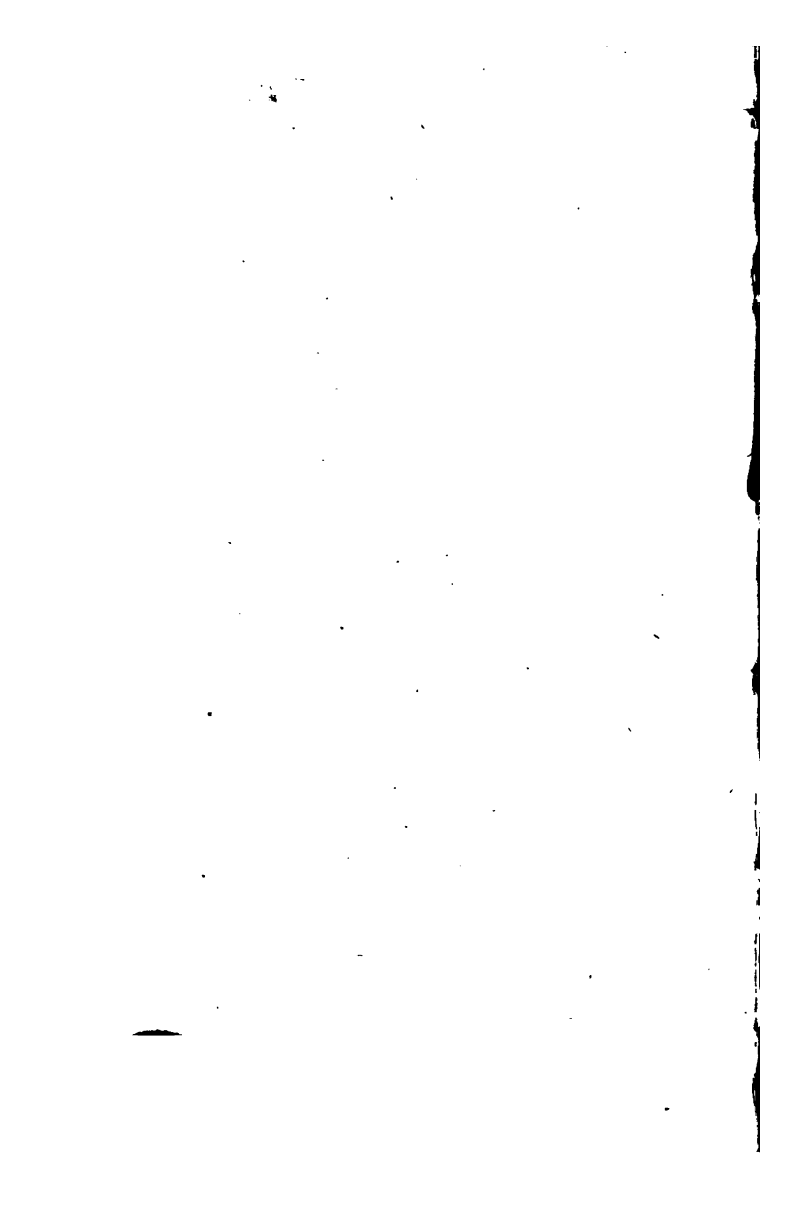


Strickland Freeman Esq.^r

Fawley Court, BUCKS,

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THE
HISTORY

OF THE
Marquis DE ROSELLE.

IN
A SERIES of LETTERS.

^{BY}
Anne Louise (Mour-
Madam ELIE DE BEAUMONT. *Dumesnil*

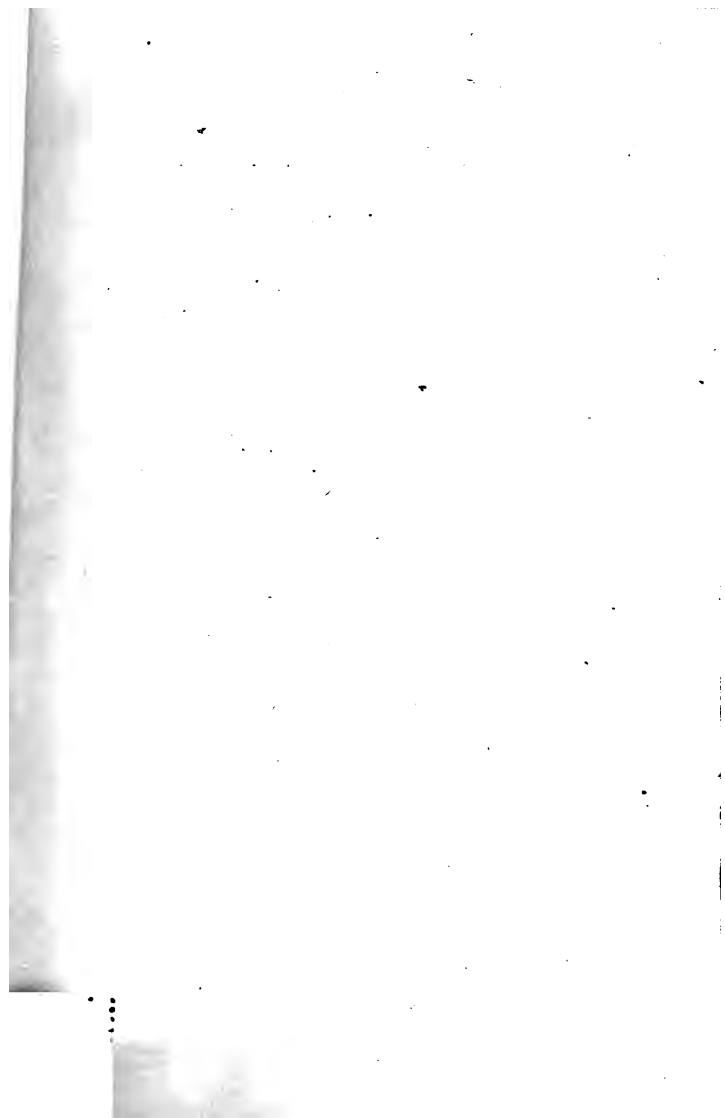
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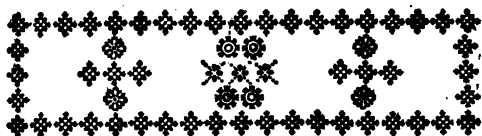
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LETTERS

OF THE

Marquis de ROSELLE.

LETTER XCII.

From the Marquis to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennas, June 6.

ADAM de Narton has doubtless informed you of our arrival. The journey has been of service to me; and I entertain great hopes from the waters, the air of the country, and from those advantages which your respectable friend is endeavouring to procure me. I cannot bestow too great eulogiums on the friendship of my fellow-traveller. No attention was

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2 L E T T E R X C I I .

wanting on his part, that could possibly be shewn me. His family has been here two days, and seems truly amiable. The mother and the sisters possess so tender and so real a friendship for our dear Ferval, that their interview almost overcame me. I think nothing can be more respectable than such an union. The three young ladies are handsome; the eldest, in particular, has charming features; and, I believe, wit and good nature. This is the brother's favourite, though he is by no means wanting in affection to the others. Madam de Narton tells me they are not rich; the custom of this province allowing hardly any fortune to daughters. This is one of the remains of that ancient barbarism, which I detest. These young persons are, indeed, to be pitied on this account. This, dear sister, is all I can tell you at present of this country, which will soon be more fertile in events. The company, who come to drink the waters, is increasing every day. Let us know all that passes with you, and I will acquaint you with every thing that occurs here. Adieu; I embrace you sincerely, and desire to be remembered to the Count.

L E T -

L E T T E R X C I I I .

*From Madam de Saint-Sever to the Marquis.**Paris, June 9.*

YOU have greatly relieved my anxiety, brother, by informing me you are already better. Your letter gave me infinite pleasure. Think only of amusement, and profit from the attentions of our excellent friend, in the procuring of such pleasures as are simple and rural. These you seem to prefer to such as are more tumultuous ; and I think you are in the right. I am extremely glad that the company you are with is agreeable to you. Madam de Narton hath many times bestowed great encomiums, in her conversation with me, on Madam and the Misses de Ferval. I compassionate, with you, the lot of these young ladies. Formerly merit and beauty supplied the place of fortune ; but this is the case no longer. I am sorry for it, both for the honour of our age and its happiness.—My husband embraces you, and exhorts you to cheerfulness ; my request, dear brother, is for a perpetuity of your affection.

L E T T E R XCIV.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de St. Sever.

Varennés, June 13.

OUR patient, my dear Countess, is recovering apace, and I assure you is not much dejected. We went out yesterday, and he was very chearful. We sat down on a grass-plot, and for amusement went to cards. Miss de Ferval had deposited several pledges of her losings, and a song was the price of their redemption. She has a most charming voice, and her graces in singing are so natural, that it is impossible not to be in raptures with them. The Marquis was really so, and sung a duet with her. In the evening he engaged her to sing again, and a little concert was formed by her, the younger sister, and Mr. de Ferval. The Marquis, who little expected to find such talents amidst rocks and precipices, was in fresh extasies. He was to have gone to the baths to-day; but he hath ordered the water to be brought hither. As I take them myself, and as the ladies have the complaisance to rise early to go out with him, he told me he would endeavour to imitate me; and that, every thing considered, he rather chose to continue here.

than

L E T T E R X C I V. 5

than to go by himself to the baths. This resolution has given me great pleasure. You know, my dear, the taste of your brother for gaiety and liberty. His unhappy adventure has altered his character; but he may yet return to his natural disposition. Our young ladies have gaiety, accompanied with wit and decorum; and such are agreeable to a man of merit. I confess to you, my dear Countess, I should be at the summit of my wishes, if the Marquis should be happy enough to approve of, and be approved by, Miss de Ferval. They are both amiable. They have been brought together by an adventure, and to this happy adventure I will leave them. If I were to interpose, all would be spoilt. I will nevertheless inform you of your brother's proceedings. Be they ever so delicate, I shall discover them. Miss de Ferval possesses, besides the advantages of education, a sensibility of soul and an honesty of heart. I will not, however, carry on the illusion. I shall see, without appearing to see. I must have relied much, my dear Countess, on the greatness of your soul, to have ventured to communicate to you such an idea. The portion, indeed, of this charming creature includes little more than her merit, her virtue, and her

6 LETTER XCIV.

her beauty; as the little fortune she can hope for is nothing in comparison to that of the Marquis; of whom, in the present language of the world, it would doubtless be said, that he had committed an act of folly: but to me, who am perhaps more interested than any of those who would speak in this manner, it appears in a very different light. As happiness is the only object worthy of pursuit, and as the opulence of your brother places him above those considerations to which others are sometimes obliged to descend, I will venture to maintain, that such an union would render his situation the envy of every person of sense and sensibility. The prudence and goodness of Miss de Ferval might be reckoned, in an exact calculation, to counterbalance a fortune. She has the management of her mother's house, and for two years has been intrusted with every particular, during which she has acquitted herself with an ease that is astonishing; and yet her attention to business is scarcely perceptible. Madam de Ferval herself has told me, that there never were greater tranquillity and order in her family, than since her daughter has taken the reins of that little government. The servants adore her; and she finds means to afford great assistance to several neighbouring

L E T T E R X C V. 7

bouring families, at a small expence. I have been informed of a thousand instances of her beneficence, trifling, indeed, in themselves, but important in their motives and effects. These sollicitudes are of more expence to her activity, than the purchase of gold to the possessor of millions. To open our purse to the unhappy, when riches have put it in our power, is no great effort ; but by our natural abilities alone to supply the want of riches in our relief of them, appears to me a double generosity.

Adieu, dear Countess ; my hopes may vanish, because they are perhaps founded only on my wishes. But, supposing otherwise, pleasing expectations always cause the time to pass agreeably. I can never regret that which is employed in the foresight or desire of good actions, and still less when employed in a correspondence with you.

L E T T E R X C V.

From Madam de Saint-Sever to Madam de Narton.

Paris, June 17.

IT would, indeed, my dear friend, have been a mortification to me, if you had judged of my sentiments in any other man-

8 L E T T E R X C V .

ner than from your own. Your wishes coincide with mine. As my brother's circumstances have placed him above all pecuniary considerations with respect to marriage, his only motive in such a case must be happiness. I should applaud the choice, even if his fortune were less. The shackles unhappily imposed upon us by the present modes, oblige us, especially in marriage, to pay a regard to fortune ; and, as luxury has placed every thing in the class of necessities, the expences it occasions are with difficulty defrayed, the burden is doubled, and the assistance even of parents, who might be able to diminish it, is precluded. I should think the situation of two persons, who without any fortune were in love with each other, extremely pitiable, because they would be imprudent to marry, and unhappy to remain single ; but my brother is not in these circumstances. He is rich, and I should think him more than happy if he could insure his own felicity by uniting it with that of a well-bred, virtuous, and amiable woman. Though you think it best not to interpose in the affair, yet your advice would be of great weight. You know best, however, what steps are most proper to be taken. Assure my
brother

LETTER XCVI. 9

brother of my sincerest love and friendship, and Madam de Ferval of that just regard I entertain for her. To give such an education to her children as she hath done is not the talent of every one. To them I likewise would beg to be remembered.

LETTER XCVI.

From the Marquis to Madam de Saint Sever,

Varennnes, June 19.

INDEED, sister, I think myself under great obligations to your Physician for his good advice, for I am scarcely the same person. My health improves daily, and I now possess a chearfulness to which I have long been a stranger. This country boasts an excellent air. I have continued at Madam de Nartop's, and the waters have been of great benefit. I am perfectly charmed with my present mode of life, and cannot conceive a greater happiness. My company is indeed very different from that to which I have been lately accustomed.

Nothing can be more simple or more lovely than our present pleasures. They are by no means far fetched or expensive; but, on
the

10 L E T T E R XCVI.

the contrary, arise from the time, place, and circumstances ; are varied with the day, and are entirely unforeseen. No description can therefore be given of them. The Misses de Ferval are the soul of these amusements. They have a gentility, a delicacy, a goodness, which is beyond expression. Goodness is an hereditary quality in this family. It is communicated by the very presence of Madam de Ferval. I was present yesterday at an affecting incident, which gave me so much pleasure, that I am willing you should participate of it. It may serve as a proof, that the best way of making mankind good, just, and honest, is to confer obligations on them. How little do true pleasures cost ?

There came into the court before the castle a man who sells goods about the country, with two horses laden. He desired to speak to Madam de Ferval. The Ladies would have sent him away, and Madam de Ferval herself thought he had only something for sale ; but as the man was earnest in his request, he was admitted. His countenance was easy, and he was about thirty years of age. His behaviour, on his entrance, was respectful, and somewhat confused. Well, friend, said Madam de Ferval, what is your business with me ?

The

LETTER XCVI. 11

The man endeavoured to return an answer to this question, but could not. At length, after some hesitation, he presented a purse, and said, These, Madam, these seven thousand livres I wish I could have brought sooner—

Why have you brought this money to me ?

It is your property, Madam ; it is yours, indeed.

Mine !

Yes, Madam it is yours. You doubtless recollect —If I had been able, I would not have delayed it so long.

You must certainly be mistaken, friend. I have lost nothing, and if it is a restitution —

No, Madam, it is a debt —It is your money, which you have only lent.

I really do not comprehend your meaning —You must certainly have mistaken me for some other person.

Oh, Madam, said he, with tears now streaming from his eyes, and again offering his purse, can Madam de Ferval ever be mistaken for another ?

But how can I receive this money, friend ? It cannot be mine.

Do not you recollect, Madam — But possibly you may have forgotten poor James, a poor orphan, who used to bring you pins.

And

12 L E T T E R X C V I .

And are you the same person ?

Yes, Madam; this is the very louis d'or which you were so good as to lend me eighteen years ago.

Indeed !

Yes, Madam. And from these four and twenty livres, which was my whole stock, I have gained, with care and labour, a little estate.

And pray, how much have you gained ?

Fourteen thousand livres, Madam. Seven thousand are in the purse. I have been pretty exact in my accounts, and I have always calculated your profit separate from my own.

My profit !

Yes, Madam, it was the agreement.

What agreement, pray ?

Do not you remember, Madam, after you had examined my little trunk —

O dear, I remember the little trunk, said Madam de Ferval, smiling. Nothing could possibly have been neater, or arranged in better order, and yet, I believe, all the things in it might have been purchased for a crown.

You were pleased to ask how I could get a livelihood by such an employment ?

The question drew tears from you.

And

L E T T E R CXVI. 13

And I made answer, Madam, that the want of money had thrown me into such difficulties that I knew not what to do.

I remember you explained to me all your little projects of trade, which manifested much good sense and understanding.

You then asked me, Madam, what sum of money would make me easy in the world.

I think it was twelve livres, you told me ; yes, it was twelve livres.

And at that time twelve livres was an estate to me. You gave me, Madam, a louis d'or, on condition I would allow you half my profit.

What an instance of integrity ! And did you really consider it seriously ?

Undoubtedly, Madam. Here are my accounts, kept with the greatest exactness. I should have been a knave to have acted otherwise.

Madam de Ferval's surprize and pleasure at the adventure were so great, that she could say no more. The man then untied the strings of his purse, and poured out the money on the table, and began to count it. But Madam de Ferval stopped him. Keep the money, my friend — You have earned it too well —

It

14 L E T T E R X C V I .

It is yours, Madam. It does not belong to me.

I desire you will take it again. Can there be a greater pleasure, said Madam de Ferval addressing herself to us, than that which I now feel. And yet how little has it cost me? The whole company was in tears. But the poor man's situation was most embarrassing. He wept, he trembled, and shewed, by every gesture, that the money belonged only to Madam de Ferval. I arrived, Madam, but yesterday in this province, said he, and have been at your house, where I was told you were here. I was fearful that my honesty would have been suspected for having delayed so long.

I am greatly pleased to see you thus both prosperous and honest. Heaven hath blessed you, and you have been deserving. I am thankful for having been the instrument of your good fortune. Go on with your business, and inform me of the success of it.

But what is to be done with this money?

I have told you it is not mine.

But consider the agreement, Madam.

I beg you will receive back the money. The agreement was intended only as an encouragement to your industry.

I receive it, then, Madam, as a gift.

It

It is no gift.

It must be a gift, Madam. I cannot receive it in any other manner.

Well, then, it shall be as you will.

Alas, Madam, you are too good. It is with gratitude I receive it, and it was with equal pleasure I brought it. But, at least, I hope you will permit these ladies to choose whatever they please from among my goods. I have some jewels —

We are greatly obliged to you, said the young ladies; but we should be very sorry to —

Ah, Madam, do you refuse me this honour? said the poor man, very affectingly.

No, friend, said Madam de Ferval, my young folks will not accept of any jewels; but have you any ribbands?

The boxes were brought in, and the man laid out his goods with greater activity and care than if he had been going to sell them.

He desired the ladies to accept of the whole, and their embarrassment was so great, that they knew not whether to accept or refuse. The former would have been an injury, and the latter an affliction to him. Is there nothing here that is worth your approbation? If I might — The ladies were at last prevailed

16 L E T T E R XCVI.

ailed on to accept some head-dresses and ribbands, and we all took some trifle or other. He then left us, full of joy and gratitude, after bestowing a thousand blessings on Madam de Ferval and her family.

A scene so affecting as this could not fail of being our chief topic of conversation for that day. Though any instance of liberality on our part would yesterday have been unreasonable, we are determined, however, not long to be in arrears. To those who are endowed with a sensibility of heart it is not enough merely to be generous : The manner is likewise to be considered. We have been very busy to-day in the preparation of a little theatre, which is to be decorated with foliage and flower-work, where we are to represent Zara and the Orphan. Miss de Ferval is to be our principal actress ; her presence will give spirit to the whole ; and the characters of Orosmanes and the Guardian are intended for me. Adieu, dear sister. When you see me I shall be quite recovered. Pray tell the Count I follow his advice in every particular. Believe me, no affection can ever exceed that which I entertain for you.

L E T-

L E T T E R XCVII.

*From Madam de Narton to Madam de
Saint-Sever.*

Varennnes, June 23.

OUR wishes, my dear Countess, have hitherto succeeded. Yesterday we had the representation of *Zara* and the Orphan. Miss de Ferval acquitted herself beyond expectation. The passion of *Orosmanes* seemed to flow naturally from the Marquis, and the character of *Zara* was equally well performed. The compliments of the whole assembly were paid to Miss de Ferval, who received them with a modesty inseparable from real merit ; and from the effects of the Marquis's compliments in particular, I have almost ventured to presage every thing that can be desired. A few days since I communicated to Madam de Ferval the compliments you paid her, which affected her sensibly ; and introduced a conversation too interesting to be concealed. I asked her by what means she had been able to give her children so perfect an education in the midst of rural obscurity, and at such a distance from that assistance, which is generally esteemed necessary. She replied, I

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have ever tenderly loved them. By manifesting my affection to them as soon as they could be sensible of it, I gained their confidence; and by gaining their confidence half the labour was completed.

To engage her to a discovery of her method, I represented the inconveniences which would probably arise from this shew of affection. Were you not apprehensive, Madam, said I, that it would be abused? Children soon perceive the force of a mother's affection, and convert it to their own purposes: They have cunning, and the heart falls a prey to it. Indulged at first in lesser matters, they at last break through all restraint, and follow no guide but their own inclination.

As I was sensible of this danger, replied Madam de Ferval, I endeavoured to prevent it. I considered, that at a certain age children are susceptible of habit, though incapable of reason, and, therefore, at this period I accustomed mine to submission. By thus inculcating obedience before they were able to speak, one of the greatest difficulties was subdued.

But, Madam, supposing children thus accustomed to submission; it is surely the submission of fear, not of love; and while they are ignorant that severity is exercised only
for

LETTER XCvII. 19

for their good, will not this fear be attended with hatred ?

By no means. My children were no sooner capable of rational sentiment, than they adored me. Reflecting that I procured them every pleasure which infancy could delight in ; that it was to me alone they were obliged, and that my only motive was to make them happy ; they were happy only with me. To be at home was their greatest pleasure ; it was an uneasiness to them to be absent. A violation of truth was punished by four days banishment from my apartment, but an acknowledgement of the crime always obtained a pardon and repeal. This was the utmost of my severity. I never had recourse to the disagreeable and barbarous custom of beating them, or depriving them of their meals. Blows are too great a disgrace to an ingenuous mind, and the want of food is injurious to health. Children should be punished, as nearly as possible, in the same manner as if they were arrived at years of discretion ; that is to say, by remorse, by shame, by the loss of the advantages of society, and by methods similar to these.

You have convinced me, Madam, that those children, who have been accustomed

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to obey before they could speak, are more docile than others ; and that they are more affected by correction, although but seldom inflicted. — Children thus educated, replied Madam de Ferval, have the highest affection for their parents, and are sensible of the favours they receive. No severity having ever been shewn them, except at an age of which the remembrance is lost, a sense of dependence remains, which is almost mechanical : And when at length, as their faculties open, they perceive that our power over them is exercised only to prevent them from doing wrong, or for their benefit, it is impossible for them not to be sincerely attached to the person who is thus the cause of their happiness.

This is undoubtedly true — And yet, is not the conduct of governesses diametrically opposite to what you have been advancing ?

Governesses act but a very imperfect part, and their attention is confined to external accomplishments. My children were always under my own care ; and I required of them only meekness, simplicity, and diligence.

Few mothers would have patience to take so much pains in the education of their children.

This.

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This negligence may be accounted for from their ignorance of the pleasures which are united with these sollicitudes. What can be conceived more pleasing than to behold the tenderness and confidence of these little ones growing up before us, to be able by a look to punish or reward them, and to be the very center of every thing they esteem : This is to be a mother, indeed !

But is not this happiness dearly purchased, by that continued anxiety which such a life must produce ?

I confess that every moment of it is not equally agreeable. Amidst so many and minute objects of attention, some of them must necessarily be attended with anxiety, weariness, and trouble, which maternal tenderness alone can support : But maternal tenderness does not only support ; it alleviates and sweetens them. A restraint upon our own behaviour is, however, indispensibly necessary. It has therefore been my constant care to conceal my own faults from my children, to appear the same at all times, and never to manifest the least caprice, or fall of passion. Thus I obtained their confidence ; and I really don't believe, said she with a smile, they think I have a fault.

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Few parents, indeed, Madam, possess such goodness and abilities. But this was only the foundation of the edifice: Much labour was still remaining.

As soon as they were capable of reflexion, I began to form their minds, by inculcating such principles as were certain and invariable. These were to be found in religion alone, and on religion I founded all the rest. I at first instructed them in such points of it as were intelligible to them; and as their intellectual sight grew stronger, I caused it to shine forth before them in all its lustre. These attentions, which were continued till they were grown up, assisted nature in her work, and she has not been unpropitious to them. By the usual method of education many ingenuous minds are ruined, more perhaps than receive benefit. But with this I have not to reproach myself. The virtues of my daughters have been the effect of their own inclinations, and thus their talents have been cultivated.

I have the pleasure to observe, Madam, that, notwithstanding the extraordinary care you have bestowed on the young ladies, their brother has no reason to complain of neglect towards himself. For humanity and honour he may be put in competition with his sisters; and

L E T T E R X C V I I . 23

and to the softer virtues, which are equally to be found in both sexes, he hath united that greatness of soul which is particularly characteristic of his own.

My son's education is not equally to be attributed to me ; his was at College, and under Preceptors. I confess, my choice would have been to have kept him at home ; but it is best to conform to custom, when we are not certain of success by acting contrary to it. I found that I should have more difficulty with him than with his sisters. The precepts, which are given in the education of men, contain many strange and dreadful assertions. I was willing that my son should be brought up in a due regard to religion, honour, and probity ; that he should learn so much of the sciences as were proper for his situation ; that he should be virtuous and accomplished ; a christian and a man of courage ; to unite all these qualities is a task of difficulty, and was above my abilities. But he has been educated as well as our present manners and prejudices would permit. No person, however, except myself, has ever had the least connection with the education of his sisters : This was less difficult, because the principles which they were to learn were certain and invariable, They were reason and virtue alone.

Were

24 L E T T E R XCVII.

Were you then always talking to them of reason and virtue ?

By no means ; I always sought a proper opportunity to communicate a taste of them ; and have found, that a lesson of probity and good-nature may be inculcated from the most trifling present that can be conferred.

You have, indeed, succeeded. The candour and goodness of heart in the Misses de Ferval are equalled only by the graces of their mind. That charming union, which so happily subsists between them, is a proof of their delicacy.

I have at all times considered, that tho' it was necessary to produce an emulation in children, yet the greatest caution was requisite to prevent it from degenerating into jealousy. The best method to suppress the growth of envy or hatred, is to prefer the action without respect to the person ; to observe the most scrupulous justice in rewards and punishments ; and never to praise one at the expence of the other. When a child is hated or neglected, he grows sullen and jealous ; and is perhaps, in the end, a misfortune to his family, and a disturbance to society : And yet the fault might not be originally his. I have, however, the happiness to reflect, that my daugh-

LETTER XCVII. 25

daughters are strangers not only to all those little squabbles so common with young people, but also to the very idea of jealousy.

This fund of goodness diffuses itself even over their common conversation, which is ever accompanied with grace and sprightliness, and is so totally devoid of the least bickering or ill-nature, that I could not fail of admiring it.

I took care to lay before them the meanness and the danger of detraction, and they now hold it in detestation. Henrietta, rather from thoughtlessness than ill-nature, had at one time a turn for sarcasm, and was possessed of the dangerous talent of mimicry. The imitation was lively ; but instead of applauding it, I was always serious. When her sisters, on first discovering this gravity, expressed their surprize, I asked them, how they could expect any pleasure to result to me from beholding, in one of my daughters, so much ill-nature, and so little good sense ? Henrietta, blushing, asked me what crime she had committed ? I represented to them the wickedness, folly, barrenness of invention, or ignorance, which always lay concealed under detraction, even when its appearances were most seductive ; that it was a meanness, by becoming the buffoon, or ape of society, to amuse one person by the ridiculous
actions

26 L E T T E R XCVII.

actions of another; and that she gave an opportunity for others to take the same liberty with herself. She was sensible of the indiscretion she had committed, and never required a second admonition.

Your manner was in this case more forcible than any words. A smile would have destroyed all.

I am quite charmed, said Madam de Ferval to me, that you, who have been so much accustomed to Paris, and to a more refined education, should think my girls worth so much notice. What can there be in them which hath merited so much of your observation?

I love to see nature and graces in their native simplicity, and these are now generally neglected. Those grace which are obtained merely by art, have always an air of falseness and constraint. The young ladies who are educated at Paris, are little more than ornamented statues, that occupy the seats of an apartment, and are condemned to childhood and silence till they are married. Their talents, if they have any, are never cultivated, and it is rare if they even appear.

It is very necessary, replied Madam de Ferval, that girls should be inspired early with that reserve which is becoming their age and sex.

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sex. The danger of indiscretion, and, in particular, of speaking unseasonably, or out of place, should with mildness be laid before them. This requires considerable attention; and for this reason, I regard every syllable that is spoke by my children, although I never enjoined them to be silent.

This is a proof of your tenderness and prudence. The contrary method must proceed from cruelty or ignorance, by which the graces of the mind are stifled, and the finest period of our life made a period of tiresomeness and restraint.

As I thus left my daughters as much at liberty as I could consistently with modesty and decorum, I always taught them, that as members of society they should be more attentive to others than to themselves, that their own amusement should be only secondary, and that they should regard the sentiments and study the taste of others. If they are sometimes chearful, they can likewise maintain a serious conversation. I have accustomed them to hear even a tedious discourse without impatience, and often leave them to such company whom it is most difficult to entertain. True politeness is founded on goodness. It must, therefore, consist in speaking to every person in the language

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guage which he is most used to, and to give attention to him. To give attention, is not merely to be silent : We must answer what is required of us. To a person who is speaking of his own affairs, his successes or his misfortunes, a gesture, a word, a look is generally satisfactory ; because we are copious in talking of ourselves, especially of our troubles, and soon grow tiresome to the hearers.

When we are interested ourselves in the tale, every minute circumstance affects us, and a show of indifference or weariness is an affront and a cruelty. If we are unhappy, our misfortunes are at least suspended if they are listened to by those who appear to be affected by them. If we are fortunate, our desire to be heard is equally strong ; we are equally wishing to communicate our happiness.

But, said I smiling, if you recommend such indulgent maxims as these, you will soon find an increase of visitors.

I have endeavoured, replied Madam de Ferval, that the discourse of my children should not be tedious. They seldom speak of themselves. It is a duty to bear this fault in others ; and with respect to those who are unfortunate, it is indispensable.

Children, in the vivacity of their age, even
if

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if they have the best dispositions, cannot, I acknowledge, long attend to what does not affect them; but they may be habituated to attention by degrees, by representing to them the happiness of being able to procure any pleasure or relief to others. They should also be early taught, the difference between that true politeness which flows from the heart, and that false politeness, which, as it affects the external behaviour only, is easily attained even by those of a contrary disposition. There are many, who think they have fulfilled all the duties which society can require from them, if they have not been deficient in returning visits, in the payment of compliments, or the observance of drawing-room ceremonies. Yet these very people will shew a disgust to the lamentations of pain, and will cruelly interrupt the melancholy relation of an honest man, who had honoured them with the supposition that their hearts were capable of sensibility. A good heart is our best guide in these circumstances; for goodness is the basis of society, of virtue, of happiness, of every thing that is valuable. By the heart, therefore, must the great work of education be begun.

The heart, Madam, is a matter of great delicacy. But though insensibility is the
source

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source of innumerable vices, is not too great a sensibility dangerous to young people ?

It doubtless is so, unless it has a proper direction ; and, in this case, the greatest circumspection is required. A heart which is in itself tender, is always easy of persuasion, and is susceptible of all the softer sensations. A mother should, by tenderness and affection, gain her daughter's heart while it is yet in infancy ; she can then form it, she may then have the virtuous possession of it, and secure its confidence. I am not insensible, it is from experience I speak, that at a certain age, the passions — But perhaps not — These passions do not actuate more forcibly than a mother's affection, when she is the friend and confident ; they are not stronger than the impressions of education, the principles of honour, that virtue, that modesty, that generous pride with which youth ought always to be inspired, especially where the heart is susceptible — I shall ever regard, said she, after a little pause, the direction of such a sensibility of disposition as the greatest happiness. That parent, who does not profit from the resources which are here to be found, is unworthy the education of such a daughter. What victories may she not obtain over herself, by conducting

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ing this delicacy of soul with gentleness and skill, and yet abandoning the honour of the triumph. In such characters the love of honour and duty is powerful, as it is a natural inclination, a pleasing sentiment, and a real passion.

But do you not think it necessary to ~~make~~ them capable, betimes, of resisting the passion of love?

I do not; such precaution is not only useless but dangerous. While they continue in infancy, they do not understand us; and when they are grown up, all the ideas you have been implanting in them of lovers and of love arise before them. They have soon vanity sufficient to think that they have beauty enough for adoration, and the reception of addresses would be amusing at least, and no way injurious to their virtue. A lover, we will suppose, now appears. The mother is by no means to know any thing of it; she has ever declaimed against love. The girl sets up for her own mistress, the lover is amiable and seducing, she is dazzled by the compliments that are paid her, and her ruin is completed.

Have you, then, never mentioned this passion to the Misses de Ferval?

If at any time the conversation hath accidentally turned on this point, I never apparently

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rently interrupted it; but changed it gradually to some other subject.

Must they not, however, have met with this subject in the course of their reading?

With romances they are entirely unacquainted. In my choice of theatrical pieces, those have been selected wherein love, appearing the cause of the greatest misfortunes, was least likely to be imitated; and from the greatness of the subject and the dignity of the language, they were led to consider the hero of a tragedy as a being of a different species from themselves. I have remarked, from the reflections which they have made, that the interest of a state, when set in opposition to that of a lover, divided their attention; and to readers, whose minds have been little captivated by the passion, the love-story in a tragedy generally appears lifeless and improbable. The reading of poetry is a material point in the polite education of daughters; because good poetry, at the same time that it does no injury to the heart, forms the taste and elevates the soul. It would be shameful, therefore, to be ignorant of the more admired writings in this part of literature. As prudence and discernment are indispensibly necessary in the choice of authors, it must be observed,

observed that, of all writings whatever, romances are the most dangerous, because young persons always apply them to themselves. Their imagination being heated, the first youth they meet is an Adonis, or a Leander; they begin to think they exist only to love, and to be without a lover is an insupportable humiliation. From such scenes of illusion might be traced their ruin of thousands.

But do you place all works of this kind on an equality. Are there no exceptions?

There doubtless are some. I might mention some English romances.

I presume you allude to Richardson's.

Richardson's! Can you disgrace his beautiful histories of the world and of humanity with the name of romances? Those histories in which Virtue instructs us by the hand of Genius? I think myself under the greatest obligations to this consummate master of education, who has communicated at once all that experience can teach. To read his works without a wish to be better, I might add, without the accomplishment of that wish, is impossible. Our very nature must be depraved if it could resist their effects. Some time since I put *Clarissa* into the hands of my eldest girl, who is now capable of receiving improvement

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from the study of morality. But this kind of reading is not yet proper for her sisters.

You may judge, from the instance I am relating, what effects Clarissa may be expected to produce on an unexperienced mind. My daughter, though she read it in private, always communicated to me her sentiments of it. She was much pleased with Lovelace, and could not blame Clarissa for loving him, when she contrasted him with his rival, whom the tyranny of her parents had forced upon her. I was particularly pleased with the concern she expressed for the fair fugitive, when she was in the coach with no one but her admirer. What an humiliation, mamma, must this have been! This man, affectionate as he was, was not her husband. What a state of dependence! Had she but reflected, she would surely have preferred any calamity, even the loss of life, to such disgrace—A nobleness of thought, a dignity of soul like this, is the summit of virtue. Endowed with such qualities the heart is impregnable.

Mis de Ferval's first ideas of love were taken, then, from Clarissa!

They were. I leave you to decide whether she will find any thing formidable in it.

But

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But will she not be ready to take every man for a Lovelace?

There is no great danger. Her inclination is my security. In the preservation of a daughter from seduction, I should much sooner rely on her virtue and her affection for me, than on any dread of Lovelaces.

Here we were interrupted in our retirement by the young ladies, who, with the Marquis and Mr. Ferval, soon accompanied us in a walk to a neighbouring meadow, where we sat down by the river side, under a row of willows, and found that an admirable echo was produced by an adjacent rock. From this happy discovery, Miss de Ferval and her sister Henrietta were prevailed on to sing. The Marquis was enraptured; and I could not myself help asking Madam de Ferval, where her daughters could possibly have obtained such accomplishments?

They were implanted, replied Madam de Ferval, by nature. Miss de Ferval and Henrietta were born with a taste for music.

But undoubtedly, said I, they have had the assistance of masters!

Masters! said Mr. Ferval. I find, Madam, you are not much acquainted with Mr. Duval,

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whom you dignify with that name. A most wretched performer !

Be that as it may, brother, said Henrietta, his assistance has been of great service to us.— He was the best, rejoined Madam de Ferval, I could procure in this part of the country, but I believe he may think himself more obliged to his scholars for their application and desire of learning, than to his own abilities.

I believe he may, said Ferval. My sisters may claim the honour —

No, brother, replied the eldest ; that must be wholly attributed to my mamma, who took so much pains to implant this taste, this desire of learning, without which we could have acquired nothing. I perceive, said she, addressing herself to Madam de Ferval, the difficulty you must have had to conceal your intentions from us. In learning to sing I never thought I was studying a task ; and was surprized to hear, from the Marquis and my brother, that at Paris this is esteemed a serious business.

I should soon forsake music, said Henrietta, if I once thought it a serious affair. Surely, mamma, it can be only an amusement. Whenever Mr. Duval has brought me any new airs, I have been impatient till I learnt them ; but I should have been very indifferent if I
had

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had considered on them as a task. Pray, has Helena ever considered painting in any other light than that of an amusement? No, indeed, said Helena. Had it not been the consequence of choice, to what purpose did I learn it? There was no necessity. I have no voice for music, I am not fond of it, and should soon have been disgusted. Painting, on the other hand, is my favourite employment, and I could spend whole days at it. For this reason, mamma, I think myself the more obliged to you for permitting me to have the instructions of a drawing-master. Here, said Madam de Ferval to me whispering, is the whole secret. They acquired these accomplishments merely as articles of amusement, and consequently with a desire to attain them.

I believe, said Ferval smiling, Henrietta would think it very strange to be reproved for not minding her dancing. —

I am here interrupted, my dear friend, by a message, to inform me of the exhibition of some fireworks; I must, therefore, close my present letter. To-morrow, I should acquaint you, is Madam de Narton's birth-day, on which occasion she will receive some flowrets from her children. I intend to be present at this little ceremony. You may depend on my

D 3 resuming

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resuming the subject of this letter, which is too interesting to be discontinued,

L E T T E R XCVIII.

From Madam de St. Sever to the Marquis.

Paris, June 24.

THE re-establishment of your health, and the return of your natural chearfulness, have given me an inexpressible pleasure. The portrait you have drawn of the Misses de Ferval is so perfectly amiable, that I cannot forbear congratulating you on the happiness you possess in so delightful a society. In one sense I may be said, indeed, to partake of it. The adventure you related to me in your last letters drew tears from me; it does honour to humanity. Yesterday I received a visit from Mr. de Valville, who knew nothing of your departure. He enquired after you with great earnestness, and I told him the substance of what you have communicated to me. Do not neglect this correspondence. I need not add our desire of remembrance to Madam de Narton. Continue, dear brother, your affection.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R XCIX.

*From Valville to the Marquis.**Paris, June 24.*

I Called yesterday, my dear Marquis, at your sister's, in expectation of seeing you; when I found you had left us, and are gone to the waters. From Madam de Saint Sever's description, you are highly pleased with your present situation : She was in raptures when she related it. You can submit, it seems, to play at questions and commands with a company of raw girls ! Upon my honour, a most manly amusement ! I could not help laughing at the solemnity with which they were treated by your sister, who certainly thinks you are in the land of wonders. And to act plays too with these country wenches ! This is keeping up the frolic, indeed ! But I offer no dissuaves, If we can but please ourselves, the object which pleases us is of little consequence. Among children we must play like children, and in the country do as they do in the country. I do not see what other amusements you can find where you are now, and it is best to be satisfied with what we can get. I should be excessively pleased with a description of some of those original characters you have an oppor-

tunity of observing; their persons would divert me more than their amusements. But I don't think I should bury myself in this manner, when there is generally such agreeable company at the baths. They were honoured last season with the presence of the Princess of — and the Dutchess of —. But if you prefer Madam de Narton's company, pray continue there. I acknowledge she is a woman of sense; tho' she wants that politeness, that elegance of manner, without which, at her age, I cannot think she can be agreeable. If such must be the conditions, may I ever be banished from the baths! What is a woman without personal accomplishments? Some women begin to talk gravely about reason, when they can no longer talk of their beauty. These female reasoners, these daughters of age and ugliness, may be tolerated for a time, but we cannot always be diverted with what is ridiculous; and even if we can raise a smile, we are disgusted afterwards. Madam de Saint Sever has told me a great deal about these Misses de Ferval, whom I can exactly figure to myself, unpolished, reserved, queer animals—But, however, if they are pretty, you may pass two or three months away in their company. Adieu, dear Marquis, I am glad to hear of your recovery.

L E T -

LETTER C.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Varennnes, June 28.

I Pity you, Valville, for knowing no pleasures but those of art; and for your insensibility to those which I now enjoy. My sister hath not deceived you. I never was more happy than at present, situated as I am, in so respectable, so delightful a society; I repeat it, so delightful a society. If it is to you insipid, you must be very unhappy; but in spite of yourself you could not but esteem it. With what indifference do you speak of the *Misses de Ferval*? You must surely be ignorant of their rank, and still more of their excellent qualities. The eldest, in particular, is worthy the regard and attachment of every man who has an adequate sense of her merit. She has wit without making pretensions to it; she possesses accomplishments without knowing she possesses them; she has the finest features which discover the finest soul, and she has talents which astonish me. When she sings, it is with a grace that Nature alone could have given her. She is a great proficient in musick, and plays excellently on the harpsichord. I have so good an opinion of your taste, at least,
that

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that if, you had seen her in the character of Zara, I am certain you could not have refrained from tears; and tears are the truest applause. Her goodness of heart is as adorable as it is uncommon. She appears likewise to have had the advantage of acquired accomplishments. She does not make any parade of her knowledge, nor does she affectedly conceal it. In a word, I never beheld a more amiable person. Rectify, then, the false ideas you have conceived of this young lady and her sisters, whose birth, education, beauty, and virtue, merit every encomium that can be conferred.

L E T T E R C I.

From Valville to the Marquis.

Paris, July 2.

WELL, Marquis, I intreat your pardon.

Upon my honour I had no such suspicion, but I find you are very gravely in love again. With Miss de Ferval, too! a lady of rank, prudent, virtuous, handsome, accomplished, and I know not what — a perfect Deity! But seriously, Marquis, let me advise you to be cautious. You have already had a trial of your weakness, your inclination for wedlock,

wedlock. Do not then delay to leave this enchanted region. Consider what a ridiculous affair it would be, if you should fall into the snare. Whatever raptures this beauty of yours may have raised in you, she is at best but a poor country girl ; and who does not know what a country girl is ? To depreciate the graces you attribute to her, would displease you, and be to no purpose ; but your behaviour really surpasses my comprehension. Is it possible that, after resisting the charms of Madam d'Asterre, the most amiable woman at Paris, the choice of whom would, in spite of all your rigid maxims of piety, have been an honour to you, you should at last fall a captive to a rustic ? Your folly would not admit of extenuation. Pr'ythee come back to town, unless you are resolved to persist in your extravagancies. Adieu. I fancy this epistle will not be very agreeable ; but it is meant to serve you.

L E T T E R CII.

From the Marquis to Valville.

Varennas, July 6.

INDEED, Valville, you have abused the laws of friendship, of a long-continued friend-

friendship. You imagine me then to be in love. You are mistaken. I thank Heaven, my heart is free ; and if I could think it possible for me again to fall a prey to that passion, I should detest the object, and break through those shackles which I cannot reflect on but with horror. I have been too great a sufferer, and the bitter remembrance which yet remains on my mind is a sufficient safeguard. There is not the least similitude between my present and former situation. *Mis de Ferval* has inspired me, not with love, but with respect, with confidence, with friendship, with sentiments which we might entertain for an angel, if an angel were to present herself before us. That passion which I conceived for *Leonora*, and have not forgotten, was a passion of heat and violence, founded on sense alone, and attended with transport or despair. Such was love, and such was that passion which almost brought me to the grave. But the sentiments with which I am now inspired, are an absolute contrast to the passion of love ; an admiration from tenderness and esteem, a confidence from mildness and attraction. What a serenity of soul, what a tranquillity have I enjoyed, when, after returning from a walk, we have entered into conversation

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versation for two or three hours successively? If you retain any prejudices against Miss de Ferval after you have once seen her, I shall have but a very indifferent opinion of you ; and the only excuse for you is, that you do not know her. I shall continue here as long as I conveniently can ; it would be with reluctance that I now should come away. My health would not permit me. Adieu ; but pray omit all disagreeable ideas and expressions in your future letters. You are not ignorant of my love for you ; I wish I could say, of my esteem for you as my friend.

L E T T E R CIII.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennnes, June 30.

THE pride which I take in speaking of Madam de Ferval and her family has convinced me, that we indulge a principle of self-love even in ascribing merit to others. The sequel of the conversation, which I promised you in my last letter, was taken up in treating of the learning that was necessary for a young lady : On which head a little controversy

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troverſy aroſe between Mr. and Miſs de Ferval. Of this controverſy I can relate only a few of the principal heads ; and cannot but regret my inability to deſcribe thoſe graces, which were diffuſed over the whole converſation by Miſs de Ferval ; whoſe beauty ſeemed to receive additional force from her ſenſe, and diſcretion ; and whoſe features were expreſſive of her ſoul. The Marquis, as well as myſelf, was in raptures.

The compliments which were beſtowed on Miſs de Ferval, who to her other accompliſhments had added a perfect knowledge of the Italian language, unaſſiſted by any maſter, gave me an opportunity of aſking Henrietta whether her taſte had been the ſame with that of her ſiſter, and whether ſhe received as much pleaſure from her leſſons in literature as from thoſe in dancing ? The queſtion embarrassed her ; ſhe appeared confuſed ; and her ſiſters could not refrain from a ſmile.

I am pleaſed, ſaid Madam de Ferval to me whiſpering, to ſee her bluſh at being ignorant. I never chide her for it ; her own confuſion ſpares me that taſk. Then raiſing her voice, Henrietta, ſaid ſhe, is not fond of any thing that is ſerious ; but I hope ſhe will think better, and that ſhe will in time be ſenſible

sensible of the necessity of instruction as well as of amusement.

Instruction, replied Ferval ! Permit me, Madam, for once to apologize for my sister. To the Ladies nothing is less necessary than study, which sullies the lustre of their charms, and occasions a negligence in those duties which are more peculiarly incumbent on them. I would have daughters be brought up to be modest, careful, and, above all, agreeable. Let them have the enjoyment of their talents ; let those talents be cultivated. Let them be made amiable woman, but by no means women of learning ; for nothing is more insupportable than a female pedant.

Pray, brother, said Miss de Ferval, where have you learnt such humiliating notions of our sex ?

From Nature, said Mr. de Ferval, who intended you to give pleasure to us, to console us in our calamities, to amuse us after fatigue or study, and to have the direction of our families, but not to be proficient in that which would render you unfit for these duties.

But have you not confounded the display of knowledge with knowledge itself ? I am well apprized, that nothing is less pleasing than a woman who affects to be learned ; but is not this
 fault

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fault disagreeable likewise in a man? Affectation of learning in your own sex is as insupportable to the rational part of ours, as a female pedant ever can be to a man of genius.

Your distinctions, sister, are too minute. Pedantry and learning are always synonymous, when applied to the fair sex.

Permit me, brother, to differ from you in a proposition so much to our disadvantage.

This, said the Marquis, approaching Miss de Ferval, this is one of our friend's extravagant notions; of which I have myself often tried to cure him; but you are most deserving of that honour. I should be charmed to hear your discussion of this interesting point.

Without a formal discussion, said Madam de Ferval to her son, I think we may venture to affirm, that, as a polite female education is now generally accompanied with instruction in some points of learning, it is an act of imprudence to oppose a custom which has been generally received, and from which no ill effects appear to result. He who is not born to alter the opinions of the age he lives in, ought always to respect them, so long at least as they are consistent with virtue. In those days of barbarism, when a Lord High Constable could not sign his name,
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it does not astonish us to hear that women could not read ; but at a period when instruction is thought an honour to mankind, a profound ignorance in the female sex would be contemptible.

Let us not, mamma, replied Miss de Ferval, rest our argument here ; if we do, my brother will certainly obtain the advantage, and will doubtless represent this as the effect of modern prejudice. Hitherto our debate has been rational ; let us not then make use of any pleas but those of reason. Had I profited better from the lessons you have given me, I should have been more capable of managing the debate with my brother ; but I will endeavour to repeat some part of what you have taught me : And I beg you will set me right, if I should deviate from your principles.

It is not to be doubted, that the grand object in every woman should be, an endeavour to please ; I do not mean merely to please the world. This last lesson, though often inculcated into young women, is a radical error in education, and is the source of many excesses, and many domestic disagreements. She must endeavour to please her husband, of whom she is at once the companion, the

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friend, and adviser. Nature hath dispenser to her, equally as to men, a rational faculty capable of cultivation and perfection. Her situation has, in like manner, imposed duties of importance on her, which she cannot fulfil, except her mind has been formed by instruction, that is, in other words, by reading and reflection. She ought to live in harmony with her husband, and to attach him to herself from a sensation of happiness. If he is not able to find in her company those resources which education alone can furnish, it is scarcely to be doubted, if he be a man of gallantry, but he will at length grow tired of it, and even separate himself from her. Intellectual beauties please much longer than those which are external. Next to her husband, her children claim her attention. As the education of these is a task common to both, the wife must necessarily bear her part in it; she, indeed, has the greatest influence in that tender period of life, when the tenderness of the mind receives the most durable impressions; and there is hardly to be conceived a greater misfortune, than when these first impressions are received from an ignorant or vicious parent. The administration of a family, and the management of servants, require

quire every woman to have studied the springs of this inferior government; this state in miniature; and not from ignorance, or capriciousness, to have considered marriage under the false ideas of liberty, pleasure, and ceremony. And lastly, even in a public view, a woman may occasion much good or much ill with respect to manners in general, according as she is more or less under the guidance of reason.

Tell me, then, what can be expected, with respect to a husband, to children, to a family, to society in general, from a woman who has never studied her duty, nor ever learned to think or reflect; for even thought and reflection are to be learnt. But where are they to be acquired, except from books of merit? History, for example, to those who know for what purpose it is to be read, is an excellent treatise of morality.

But do you imagine, replied Ferval, that you shall ever have a state to govern, or an army to command?

No, brother, men themselves can have no greater duty than this. Is history to be confined to Princes and Generals? Are not the disorders of the human mind, at all æras and in all places, a great lesson of wisdom; and may not acts of courage, generosity, and

heroism, serve as examples to every station of life, if we are capable of making a proper application of them?

But will not these lessons and examples, by filling your mind with objects so far above your condition, take from you that idea of simplicity which is so necessary to your conduct? Can you descend, from such elevated reflections, to the affairs of a family, or the care of children?

Take care, brother, lest you consider us only in the light of servants. It would certainly be inexcusable for a wife to neglect all the duties of her province, and to shut herself up in her library; as it would be equally so in a husband, if he were to abandon his business and his connections, and to wrap himself up in the sciences. The discharge of our necessary duties is always to be pre-supposed; but when this is done, a woman may be allowed to retire and cultivate her mind by reflection and reading; and, believe me, she who can employ herself in this manner, will be less likely to neglect her duties, than one who is not so well acquainted with them; and that woman who hath never applied her mind to any study, will ever remain in a state of childhood, liable to

every

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every perturbation, and susceptible of every weakness.

And yet, interrupted Ferval, these latter are always the most agreeable; their very ignorance has an air of complacency; their only endeavour is to please, and they succeed.

Mighty well! A little while ago we were to be servants, and now we are to be mere puppets; but you will obtain no honour by degrading us in this manner. No, Sir, we will not submit to be your slaves or your play-things. We claim a higher rank, the rank of daughters, mothers, sisters, companions, friends. I know that our duties are sometimes less solemn than yours; that one of the most essential is that by which we are bound to be amiable; and that we are not to neglect any of those graces which will render us agreeable: But I know likewise, that the graces of the mind give an additional lustre to personal charms.

You might have ventured to add, said Madam de Ferval, that it is these alone which give that lustre. It may be observed, that the company of women of education is courted with more assiduity, than that of those who have only their natural beauties to boast; because the rational faculty is satisfied only by an intellectual communication.

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I acknowledge, replied Miss de Ferval, that there are abstruse points of learning, which do not seem consistent with our situation. There have, indeed, been women who have distinguished themselves in this respect; but these examples are rare. I am speaking in a general sense,

This, said I, is owing to the weakness of our faculties.

And perhaps too, replied Miss de Ferval, to the multiplicity of our duties. You see, brother, I disguise nothing. I am willing to own, that women were not intended for the sciences; but there are inferior articles of learning, which, as I have observed, may be attained equally by us as by you. They are not, indeed, to engross our whole time, but in what manner can we employ our leisure hours better than in these? Would you deprive us of amusements, and separate us from that which of all others is the most innocent? No woman, however exempted from labour, can employ her whole time in a perpetual succession of amusements. In her retirement she can entertain herself by reading; but if this resource be taken from her, she will soon be disgusted with a family solitude, and will fall a prey to giddiness and inconstancy. Her youth

youth will be spent in tumultuous pleasures; perhaps in intrigue; and she will devote half her time to the toilette: And when this mode of life shall no longer be compatible with her years, she will at last addict herself to gaming. Is not this an abridgement of the lives of such women as are born to the inheritance of fortunes, but whose minds have remained uncultivated? So many families have experienced the consequences, that I am surprized you should be a stranger to them.

What your sister has asserted, said Madam de Ferval, is agreeable to reason. One of the principal objects which, in my opinion, every person who is entrusted with a female education ought to have in view, is to implant the love of reading, and acquiring agreeable points of knowledge; because so genteel an amusement will not only form the minds of young people, but will preserve them from other tastes, which are always trifling, and sometimes dangerous. To know how to employ our leisure is necessary at every age of life; in youth it is a preservative; in age it is a resource; and it is economical at all times,

Let each of us, sister, replied Mr. de Ferval, give up a part of the argument, and come to an accommodation. I will consent that

the ladies shall read at their leisure moments, when they are alone and have nothing else to claim their attention : But you must consent, on the other hand, that they talk not of their reading, that their learning shall lie concealed, and never be mentioned in any conversation.

What a strange opinion, brother ! To what purpose must there be all this mystery ? Suppose that in my presence a circumstance of history should be mentioned, or a discovery in geography, or any similar observation ; must I be excluded from a conversation which is interesting to me ? Surely I might speak of it as I might speak of the news of the day, without any affectation, without any pretension to extraordinary learning, or valuing myself on a knowledge of that which every person might know as well as I ?

But this will be only triumphing over those who are not so learned as you.

It will be their own misfortune, then. Let them have more knowledge, or less pride. I will not refuse to enter into a conversation with them, on a head-dress or a favourite lap-dog ; nor will I ever wish to shine at their expence ; but I will never be debarred from speaking as freely, and with more pleasure, on interesting subjects. It is a duty, I confess,
which

which we owe to society, if some ladies should not relish any conversation of this sort, to change it to another topic ; but I should never submit to own myself ignorant, in the company of those who have been better educated. If conversation is to be deprived of these interesting subjects, when the common topics of the day are exhausted, it will sink into the relation of insipid tales, frivolous remarks, or absolute scandal. The only fault which a woman, that has abilities and a fluency of words, is likely to fall into, is an impertinence, or an affectation of distinction. Even you, brother, do not dislike the talent, which certainly is an additional beauty, but the abuse of it ; and that ridiculous vanity which you think will result from it. But on this I have already declared my opinion. I would not have women pedantic, nor do I require them to be learned. I wish them only to be permitted to receive some of the advantages of education ; that they may at least be considered by the men as rational, and valuable members of society.

I find, sister, you mean to break through all subordination, and would place your sex on an equality with ours. This is really going too far.

I thought,

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I thought, brother, replied Miss de Ferval, I had drawn a line between your duties and ours, and had distinguished what was our true merit, our accomplishments, and what ought to be our studies. I do not deserve this reproach. My intention was only to rectify your ideas of our sex; I did not mean to infringe the privileges of yours. This would be to subvert society. But, said she smiling, I think our debate has taken a very serious turn!

Is it not, sister, upon a serious subject? If you did but know from what author these ideas of mine have been taken —

I am very willing, brother, to give all due homage to superior talents; but we may be permitted to discuss a proposition, and assent only where reason convinces us.

And can you, said the Marquis, resist Reason herself, when she is thus accompanied with the Graces? Come, Ferval, be ingenuous, and acknowledge you have lost the victory.

There's gallantry for you, sister! Do you allow all that?

The Marquis, replied Madam de Ferval, is certainly very obliging: But as it grows late, I think we had better conclude our argument. We arose, and returned to the castle. While we were coming back, Madam de Ferval told

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me, that her eldest daughter was so fond of reading when she was only ten years old, that she was obliged to put every book out of her way; while Henrietta, on the contrary, totally disliked it. I am not pleased, said she, with these very early talents: We must be children during the age of childhood, if we would be rational at the age of reason: This passion of hers for study is now restrained, therefore, to the bounds of moderation and prudence. Helena continues much the same as she has ever been; but her reluctance gives me no uneasiness. Her vivacity has hitherto prevented her application; but she requires only to be followed a little, and to have proper opportunities thrown in her way. I have remarked, that she has read some books which had thus fallen into her hands; they were, I acknowledge, rather amusing than instructive: But we must always begin with what is most pleasing, and ascend gradually from pleasure to utility.

What is your opinion, my dear Countess, of this excellent parent? Is she not herself entitled to every compliment that is paid to the talents and graces of her daughters? She is now beginning to reap the fruit of her honourable labour, and I believe will receive a great reward. This lady with her youngest daughters

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daughters went home from us three days ago ; but Miss de Ferval still remains here, in consequence of her mamma's promise, that she should spend one season with me. The Marquis is not, I think, insensible to such merit and accomplishments ; and Miss de Ferval, though with the utmost modesty and reserve, cannot conceal an emotion which his assiduities have occasioned. Her brother stays with her. I cannot, my dear friend, help expressing my hopes, that you will have no reason to repent your brother's visit to Varennes.

L E T T E R C I V .

From Miss de Ferval to her Mother.

Varennes, July 1.

ALTHOUGH two days only have elapsed since your departure, your absence, my dear mamma, has sensibly affected me: I hope, however, you will keep your promise, and that nothing will happen to detain you above the fortnight. Madam de Narton's is a most charming situation; her acquaintance, I should think, would never require many invitations to return her visits; there time will glide away insensibly. I shall be obliged to you to send
my

L E T T E R C V. 61

my guittar. The Marquis de Roselle has just received from Paris a packet of novelties, and among them some charming airs from the new operas. He is so obliging as to accompany me in singing them, having a fine voice, and an admirable taste. I endeavour to form my taste from the instructions which he has given me. His politeness is beyond description ; and his lessons, which are in fact little concerts, give great pleasure to Madam de Narton, who desires me to assure you of her friendship. The Marquis presents his respects to you, and my brother joins with me in the most affectionate sentiments. I embrace my sisters with the most perfect cordiality.

L E T T E R C V.

From Madam de Ferval to her Daughter.

Ferval, July 2.

I AM in doubt, my dear child, whether I shall be able to return to Madam de Narton's so soon as I proposed. Henrietta is ill ; she found herself indisposed yesterday, and has had a fever all the night ; but the Physician is in hopes it will not be attended with danger. I sincerely wish it may not ; but her recovery will require time and caution. Do not be uneasy ;

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uneasy; you may depend on hearing from me as frequently as possible.

Adieu, dear girl. I am sent for in haste by your sister. I need not repeat the assurances of my affection to you.

L E T T E R C V I.

From Miss de Ferval to her Mother.

Varennas, July 3.

YOU have acquainted me, my dear mamma, with my sister's illness; but why did you not send orders that I might come, and share in the fatigue which it must occasion? Were I not assured of your perfect knowledge of my heart, I should be apprehensive that you thought me either incapable or unworthy of serving her. But I am persuaded to the contrary. Your parental affection, which is not to be described, would induce you to sacrifice your own health to preserve that of your children. I entreat that you will send for me. Helena's constitution, I am certain, will not permit her to break into the hours of rest, and the whole fatigue will consequently fall on you. This event, notwithstanding all the endeavours of Madam de Narton and the Marquis to console me,

gives

L E T T E R CVII. 63

gives me much affliction. It is, however, some alleviation to be in the company of those who are endowed with so much sensibility. My brother had resolved to set out immediately, but was prevented by the servant, who signified your request to the contrary. What, mamma, could be your inducement?

L E T T E R CVII.

From Madam de Ferval to her Son and Daughter.

Ferval, July 10.

YOU need not, my dear children, be under any surprize at the mystery of my last letter. Henrietta's illness was the measles, and her sister was seized with the same disorder in two days after. It would have been imprudent, therefore, to have sent for you; and, as the air is still contagious, your departure from Varennes had better be deferred for at least a fortnight or three weeks. Your sisters are both out of danger, but still keep their bed. Adieu. Resume your tranquillity, and relieve the anxiety of Madam de Narton.

L E T -

LETTER CVIII.

From Madam de Saint-Sever to Madam de Narton.

Paris, July 5.

YOU can hardly imagine, my dear friend, the pleasure I received from Madam de Ferval's plan of education, which discloses Nature and Reason in all their simplicity. It is very different from that which is followed here; but I think I can discover the occasion of this difference. Such an education as Madam de Ferval's children have received, requires a considerable fund of virtue, tenderness, discretion, and goodness; and by such parents as possess these qualities, her plan will always be followed. But what can be expected from women, whose abilities are confined, or whose hearts are insensible to maternal affection? It is less difficult to order a girl to be silent, than to instruct her how and when to speak. I am of opinion, therefore, that this fault in education, which is so greatly and generally injurious, proceeds from an indifference in mothers, from whom it descends to the daughters, and thus devolves from generation to generation. Of this indifference, I take dissipation to be the original cause. A modern lady pays little regard to her husband,
her

her children, or her duty; because her attention is confined to herself and her amusements. How frequently do we see children spoiled in their earliest infancy by such mothers, who play with them, and treat them in the same manner as they do their dolls? When these children grow up, and require a real tenderness, all love is withdrawn from them. They then are looked upon as expensive incumbrances; and if they happen to be daughters, every dispatch is made to marry them to the best advantage, that no care on their account may ever return. My surprize at that strength of argument which was displayed by Miss de Ferval, was equalled only by the pleasure which I received from it, and your description of the disposition and excellencies of this amiable girl has rendered me impatient for the accomplishment of our wishes. My brother finds the waters perfectly agree with him. The journey was, indeed, a fortunate one. It is a real felicity, my dear Madam, to have such a friend as you; and no one can possibly have a higher sense of it than myself.

L E T T E R C I X.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de St.-Seyer,

Varennés, July 11.

I Cannot help thinking, my dear Countess, that in order to inspire the giddy train of youth with a disgust for intrigues, it would be sufficient to set before them a representation of pure affection. Such a picture I have now before me; and it is impossible not to be affected with it. What most of all charms me, is, the situation of our two lovers, for such I must now call them, who have no suspicion of any such sensation. I verily believe that your brother has not had one thought of his being in love with Miss de Ferval; and I am still more certain, that she has never considered the Marquis as her captive. From this mutual ignorance a confidence has arisen, which, when they shall become better acquainted with their emotions, will exist no more. I am highly pleased with this state of innocence, and have no wish to undeceive them. By entering the drawing-room yesterday, however, I unexpectedly interrupted them. They had scarcely been a minute alone; but, though I will not venture to assign a reason, the face of
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L E T T E R CX. 67

of my young friend was immediately covered with blushes. I have likewise observed in her, ever since, an air of inquietude, which I had never seen before; but I believe she does not know I took notice of her confusion. Her sisters have lately been ill with the measles; and her concern at not being able to attend them, and relieve her mother's anxiety, was exquisite. But Madam de Ferval prudently resolved not to expose her daughter or son to the infected air. I could scarcely refrain from complimenting Miss de Ferval on so sincere a desire to leave us, during so enchanting a period as that of a growing passion; a passion the more seductive, as she is unconscious of it. Nothing, I am satisfied, will ever prevail on her to neglect her duty. Adieu, my dear Countess; it grows late. The Marquis is no longer a valetudinarian. The waters of Bains are surely miraculous!

L E T T E R CX.

From Miss de Ferval to her Mother.

Varennnes, July 11.

WHAT a proof, mamma, of your tenderness! I could hardly have thought, after such encouraging messages as we daily

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received,

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received, that the illness of my sisters was dangerous. You were willing to conceal the danger from us, till it was over: But this, my dearest mother, was, indeed, too much! I am not under the least apprehension of any contagion, and therefore intreat it of you, as a favour, that I may return home. My brother, indeed, had better not be exposed so early, but my presence is absolutely necessary. I am certain it is. But if you did but know—if I dared—Do not refuse me this request. Our separation has continued almost a fortnight, and I never wished to see you with such earnestness as I do at present. Adieu, dear mamma; and continue your regard to a daughter, whose every wish is to render herself worthy of such a parent.

L E T T E R C X I.

From Miss de Ferval to her Mother.

Varennnes, July 12.

IT is your desire, then, you have even laid your commands on me, that I should remain here. You have assured me that you do justice to my sentiments; and have judged so favourably of them, as to attribute to my affection the whole honour of my earnestness to
return

L E T T E R CXI. 69

return home. I am fearful, however, lest this elogium should be unmerited—I blush—I tremble—But confidence shall not be conquered by shame and timidity. To keep silence with you now, would be dangerous, and perhaps criminal. You alone are my confident; on you, therefore, I will repose myself, as my guide and comforter. With what earnestness do I wish, my dear mother, that in your arms, on your bosom, I could pour out my heart—I fall, at your feet I fall, and implore your assistance—How great is the secret with which I am now going to entrust you?—I fear—Yes, dear mamma—Love!—Emotions, strange and unknown before, have agitated my soul. Hope, fear, pleasure, uneasiness, alternately succeed each other, and every idea is fixed on one object. What a perturbation, elevating to rapture, or depressing to despair! Two days only have passed since I first suspected myself of so dangerous a weakness. How many trials have I already experienced; and what tears have I shed! Shall I name the cause? An accident discovered it. By Madam de Narton's leaving the room, I was left with the Marquis alone, who appeared much affected by the illness of my sisters. On my expressing my hope of being

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sent for that day, or the next at farthest;
 “Will you, said the Marquis, leave us so abruptly? Your mamma has made an absolute promise to Madam de Narton, that you should continue here the season — Besides, your sisters are not in danger — What can be your motive? — Surely you will not go so soon!” — While he spoke these words, he seemed in agitation, dejection, and surprize — But, Oh, mamma, had he perceived my emotion! Madam de Narton, however, re-entering, gave me an opportunity to retire to my chamber, where I reflected on my extreme agitation, and endeavoured to discover the occasion of it. What tears followed this reflection! Here then was the ray of light which opened the recesses of my heart — And yet, can so much emotion, so much anxiety, proceed from a simple mark of politeness and friendship? Is it not an humiliation to love, and to be the first to entertain that passion? — Can respect be his motive for concealing his? — Possibly, his esteem for me is the cause! — Esteem! — Has he, then, penetrated my sentiments? — I flatter myself he has not. — My most ardent wish is to conceal my blushes from the eyes of all, but especially from his — Even if he should love me, if any thing in me has
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L E T T E R CXI. 71

given him pleasure — But with what am I flattering myself? No. I will not give way to such flattering ideas — The inferiority of my circumstances — Had he been doomed to a less fortune ! or had my station been more elevated ! — But what illusions are these ! Forgive, dear mother, forgive these marks of weakness, which I blush at. — Nothing of what I write to you shall ever be blotted out ; my heart shall lie open to you, and you shall be the sole judge of every disorder in it. I am subject to weakness, but I have a friend who will teach me to triumph over it ; a friend who is tender, prudent, and capable of assisting me ; who gave me birth, who formed my mind to virtue, who has no wish but for my happiness, from whom I will never conceal a thought, and with whom no object of love shall ever come in competition. I find myself already relieved by the confession I have made of my weakness. I am strengthened, I am tranquil, when I reflect that my mother is devoted to me, and that I shall soon be with her. Recall me, tear me from hence, my honoured, my adorable parent. I am impatient to embrace you, my dearest sisters ! Why have I been exempted from that risque of life which you have undergone !

L E T T E R · CXII.

*From Madam de Ferval to her Daughter.**Ferval, July 13.*

YES, dear girl! thy mother is indeed thy friend; and thou art worthy of her friendship. The confidence which you have placed in me hath affected me with pleasure, I had almost said with gratitude: It is one of the greatest marks of filial tenderness. How sincerely do I pity your situation! I have ever feared that dangerous gift with which you have been endowed, your sensibility. A heart so susceptible as yours requires the most rigid virtue, and with such a virtue I have endeavoured to inspire you. I have no apprehensions on this head; my uneasiness arises from your inquietude, with which I cannot but reproach myself, because I might both have foreseen and prevented it. The Marquis de Roselle was born to enjoy the love of a heart like yours: I ought not, therefore, to have exposed you to so great a danger. Do not forget that it is your mother who is now accusing herself to you. It is your part to assist her to repair her faults.

Be attentive. You have already said to yourself, I can have no hopes of espousing the
 Marquis;

Marquis; to this the inferiority of my fortune is a sufficient obstacle. Such marriages are, indeed, very rare. Few sacrifices are made to merit alone, and virtue has nothing seductive. A deserving girl may be esteemed, she may be pitied for her want of fortune, and her company may perhaps be courted; but after all, she will seldom get a good husband. Consider how great must be the Marquis's affection for you, if, for your sake, he could think of sacrificing all his brilliant hopes? Can you flatter yourself with such a thought? You are no stranger to his late passion for Leonora. Must it not have exhausted his heart of every sensation of love? But supposing him not incapable of that tender sentiment, can he be so soon affected by a new object? That proposal, in which your prejudices thought they discovered a passion, might result only from politeness, familiarity, the love of agreeable company, or from friendship. You seem already to have discovered your mistake; I am glad of it. This mistake is common, especially with those who have been brought up in a seclusion from the world, and whose vanity has misled them. Love, indeed, might have drawn you into it, had not reason preserved you from it. Let us beware of flattery; it is safer to yield
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to fear, than to rely too much on hope. We are at all times much nearer allied to misfortune than to happiness.

The health of your sisters will not permit me to set out within less than four days for Vercourt, where I shall expect to meet you. Do not, by any means, think of coming hither, as the air cannot but still be infected; and so abrupt a departure might disclose that which, at present, it is best you should seem not to know. This is the first time I ever advised you to dissimulation; but in this case it is not only lawful, but decency and honour render it necessary. Be particularly cautious in your behaviour towards the Marquis, whom you will do well to avoid, without seeming to avoid him. Appear neither to dread his presence nor to court it, but endeavour to decline conversation with him, except in the view of Madam de Narton, on whose greatness of sentiment I rely. Pursue that plan which fortitude inspires. Reflect, that perhaps you may never again behold him who is now the object of your tenderness; and that he, perhaps, may never have another thought of you. Recall to your memory those days of happiness which were spent with me in serenity and liberty of heart; and forget not that

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L E T T E R C X I I . 75

we were born to militate with ourselves, and to find peace in victory alone. Think of that multitude of errors to which love will expose you. Consider that your duty commands you to forget a man, who was never intended to be your husband ; and that nothing is wanting to complete your tranquillity while you are in the family of your mother ; while you enjoy the pleasures of innocence, benevolence, and virtue. I perceive that your heart will be torn by such reflections as these ; but may they prevent your future life from being more embittered !

I have nothing to direct you, with respect to your conduct ; I only am fearful lest your embarrassment should cause a discovery. Endeavour to assume an air of gaiety, during your continuance at Madam de Narton's : I shall be equally impatient as you till we meet in mutual embraces, to mingle our tears, and console each other. Then you may give the last touches to the representation of your distress. I wish to know no more than what you will tell me ; but I shall even then know all. I am sensible how much uneasiness I have avoided, by inspiring you betimes with a love of virtue. I embrace you, my dearest girl, with the most ardent affection.

L E T -

L E T T E R CXIII.

*From Madam de Ferval to Madam de Narton.**Ferval, July 13.*

YOU have obtained then, Madam, the secret of my daughter's heart*. She is in love ; she has acquainted me with her passion ; but it is to myself alone the fault can be imputed. She was ever susceptible, and has had few opportunities of conversing with men, especially with those of her own age. For once I have failed in the resolution I had made, never to suffer a daughter to form connections with any man, while there was an uncertainty that he would be her husband. The projects you mentioned are the effusions of a sincere friendship. If they can be brought about at all, my daughter's departure will be no hindrance ; it will give you a better opportunity to observe the sentiments of the Marquis. I dare not, however, hope so much : It is my part to act as if no such wish had ever arisen. I am waiting till Helena has recovered strength enough, by the assistance of a litter, to accompany me to my

* It appears from this passage, that Madam de Narton had communicated to Madam de Ferval her suspicions, and her views in consequence of them, by some letter not included in this collection.

little estate at Vercourt. I intend to be there by Thursday, and shall expect to meet my eldest daughter, whom I cannot think of exposing to the contagious air of this place. One of the servants is actually dead; but I have been happy enough to conceal this event from her. You have manifested great prudence, in so industriously keeping from her your suspicions. Continue, I intreat of you, your care over her conduct; but do not apparently follow her. Even with vulgar minds too close an inspection is useless, and engages them to other methods of deceit; but to cultivated minds it is highly pernicious. A girl of virtue and delicacy cannot but be offended if she finds herself observed. It will be best, for the few days she will remain with you, to assist her secretly in preventing any of those opportunities, which are so embarrassing to a young mind in love. If I were to entrust her to you for any longer period, I should exhort her to disclose her sentiments, and commit herself to you as to her guide. From that confidence she has ever placed in you, she could scarcely refuse it; but modesty is more delicate than reason. Adieu, dear Madam, your regard to my daughter and to myself leaves me in perfect tranquillity.

L E T-

LETTER CXIV.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennés, July 15.

I Confess to you, my dear Countess, that I have not yet been able to inform myself, with any certainty, of your brother's sentiments. Had I written to you yesterday morning, I should have told you, what has appeared to me certain for these eight days past, that he was deeply in love with Miss de Ferval. He seemed uneasy except in her company; he was ever seeking her; she was the only object of his attention in our little excursions, and her excellencies were the only topics of his conversation whenever he spoke to me. In short, no doubt remained of his passion; it charmed me, and my sole endeavour was to find opportunities to cherish it. Yesterday evening we agreed to take an airing as far as Bains, to enjoy the pleasures of the grove, which is rendered extremely agreeable by the resort of company. We had been there several times before; but as Ferval was pre-engaged, our party at this time consisted only of Miss de Ferval, the Marquis, and myself.

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Every thing passed very agreeably, and your brother, as usual, addressed many spritely compliments to our young friend. Thus engaged, we had been walking about a quarter of an hour, when a lady of some beauty, followed by her servant-maid, passed and re-passed us several times. The Marquis did not at first take notice of her; but as soon as he had observed her, he betrayed a visible surprise, and several times changed colour. When this lady returned, he gazed on her; still, however, striving to conceal his earnestness; and whenever he spoke, it was with the greatest confusion. I therefore motioned our return home, and he followed us mechanically. At night I took an opportunity to ask him, whether he knew the lady? He blushed, assured me he was not acquainted with any of the company now at the waters, and soon after withdrew, excusing himself as indisposed with the head-ach. Miss de Ferval and myself rose this morning at the usual time, but the Marquis had not left his room; I therefore sent to enquire how he did. He sent word he had had a very restless night, and that he desired leave to decline the waters for this morning. When he was risen I asked him more particularly of his disorder; he

told

told me, he suspected the waters had not their proper effect, and that he had some thoughts of going to his apartments at Bains, and trying them for a few days at the spring. Ferval offered to accompany him, but the Marquis refused, urging his reluctance to put him to an inconvenience, as his lodgings were small, and would not, without great difficulty, admit of two persons ; he desired, therefore, not to be pressed any further on that head. He is now gone out, leaving us in the greatest surprise ; Ferval is displeased with his refusal ; and poor Miss de Ferval's affliction, which is not concealed from me, has given me inexpressible uneasiness. What an affliction, that I should be the instrument of making this dear girl unhappy ! She endeavoured to be cheerful at dinner, but her gaiety was not natural. The Marquis, who is gone to lie at Bains, is absent, sorrowful, and agitated. But I will not venture to express any suspicions. I can scarcely give way to them. Can it be possible ? May Heaven preserve us from new troubles !

LETTER CXV.

*From Miss de Ferval to her Mother.**Varennas, July 16.*

DEAREST, tenderest mother, how well-founded were your conjectures! How great is my misfortune! Send for me, I intreat of you, send for me, without a moment's delay. I die — The Marquis is unworthy — And yet I love him — He has seen Leonora, and his passion is rekindled. He has left us. He is gone to Bains, where this creature now is. How slow will time seem to move till we meet! When in your arms, I will lament my unhappy weakness! I thought, alas! I had entertained no sentiment of hope. But, Oh! my dearest mother.

LETTER CXVI.

*From Madam de Ferval to her Daughter.**Ferval, July 16.*

FLY, fly then to my arms! your misfortune, my dear child, increases my tenderness. The object of your affection is no longer worthy of it; but nothing more can be

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known at present. All that is left for you, is the mournful indulgence of sighs and tears. Those tears I will wipe away. I will set out a day sooner than I proposed for Vereourt, where your sisters will rejoin us, and I shall expect you with the utmost impatience.

L E T T E R CXVII.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennnes, July 16.

MY suspicions, dear Countess, were but too well-founded; the lady I spoke of was no other than Leonora. Ferval saw her this morning, but the Marquis was not with her. I cannot conceive how this unhappy creature got here, nor what could be the occasion of her coming. I have not myself seen the Marquis to-day, but Ferval met him this morning at the Wells; and he appeared greatly embarrassed. Ferval, however, mentioned nothing of any discovery, but only asked whether we should not see him soon: To which the Marquis replied, that he did not think he should be able to come
hither

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hither to-day;—but that, if he possibly could, he would certainly wait on us to-morrow.

Miss de Ferval has this moment left us, her mother having requested her departure, which, notwithstanding the pleasure I received from her company, perfectly charmed me; although her efforts to conceal her grief, as they must certainly have redoubled it, increased my pity for her. What reproaches have I not to make to myself! and how easily was I persuaded to believe what I wished! what a source of uneasiness will this relapse, for such I fear it is, be to us all! even to the Marquis himself? Adieu, my dear Countess. Arm yourself with resolution.

LETTER CXVIII.

From Madam de Saint-Sever to Madam de Narton.

Paris, July 19.

WHAT a reverse, my dear friend—I can support it no longer. Can my brother be really so weak! and that to so contemptible a degree! I tremble—I am all in tears—But I conjure you not to abandon him; by our friendship I conjure you, have pity on

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his youth. I foresaw that our troubles would increase, as soon as I received your letter. I presume Leonora had obtained information of my brother's journey, and that, relying on her ascendant over him, she seized this opportunity of meeting with him. Keep me not, I beg of you, in ignorance of any thing. Do not regard my weakness. Fear always magnifies every object; let nothing then be concealed from me, whatever uneasiness it may occasion me. Your friendship, my worthy friend, is my greatest relief. It will cost you much trouble, but I will not be ungrateful.

LETTER CXIX.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint Sever.

Varennas, July 18.

EVERY thing, my dear Countess, that occurs here, is an ænigma, and will exercise our passions till we obtain the solution. I would willingly conceal my perplexity from you; but lest your imagination should out-run events, I will venture to acquaint you with all that I know, whether it be the harbinger of hope or fear. Yesterday evening the Marquis

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quis returned hither, and told me, with great politeness, that he found the waters in no degree better at the Wells than at my house, and that he thought them much less agreeable. I congratulated him; we were both diverted by his scrupulousness about the waters, and he told me, he began to think himself a counterpart to the Imaginary Patient. In a few moments I perceived he was greatly agitated by some inward emotion, and in a state of insensibility to every external object. At last, he asked me, whether Miss de Ferval was gone out? Miss de Ferval, replied I, was sent for, and has been gone these two days. She is now at Vercourt with her mamma and her sisters. The Marquis was motionless. — And is Ferval gone, too? — Yes, he followed his sisters; but as he left me alone, and as his journey would not exceed two leagues, he promised to return this evening. The Marquis then proposed to go and meet him, and I accepted the offer. As soon as he perceived Ferval, he ran to embrace him; and immediately enquired after the health of his sisters. Ferval told him they were much better, and that in a few days they would be quite recovered. For what purpose, then, said the Marquis, could Miss de Ferval possibly be sent for?

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Upon my word, Marquis, I am not in the secret; I have received no explanation of the motives of my mother's conduct. My two other sisters have supported their journey extremely well; but, though we were kept in ignorance, their illness has been very contagious. Even that air they have brought with them is terrible; for my eldest sister is dejected, and altered much for the worse. And if we should be so unhappy — At these words, which affected me in a very sensible manner, the Marquis grew pale. I asked Ferval, what her illness was. He told me, she had scarcely eaten any thing for two days; that she kept her room; and that Madam de Ferval was constantly with her.

As soon as the Marquis heard this melancholy news, he appeared much affected. He afterwards came and made a proposal to Ferval, to go with him to-morrow to pay a visit, which, though he never thought of it before, he recollected was owing to Madam de Ferval. Ferval represented to him, that though this visit would be as agreeable as it would be honourable to his mother, yet the embarrassment which the late scene of illness had thrown her into, might possibly induce her to wish that he would delay the favour for a few days.

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days. But the Marquis insisting that it was absolutely necessary to know how Miss de Ferval did, I proposed to send the next morning to Vercourt, and, if she should be better, to go thither in the afternoon. To this the Marquis agreed, and seemed much relieved. I was just coming away to write to you, when a sort of chamber-maid, who came from Bains, desired to speak to the Marquis, and delivered a letter ; he withdrew immediately, with great precipitation, to read it ; and I am told he is now employed in writing an answer. Surely this is not some new finess of Leonora ; if it is, what an influence must she still retain over him ? I said before, every thing is an ænigma. I have not spoke a syllable, however, to the Marquis on this head, and will by no means introduce it.

Depend on it, my dear friend, I will communicate to you every circumstance I know ; and do you rely upon my openness equally as on my friendship.

LETTER CXX.

*From Leonora to the Marquis.**Bains, July 18,*

YOU shun me, my dear Marquis, I am odious to you, I see it, and I am in despair. Am I then so culpable? Have I betrayed you? Letters, purchased as basely as they were sold, are the cause, the only cause, of your hatred to me. Had I been less open, could I not have disavowed them? Could I not, at least, have induced you to suspect that they were counterfeited? It is possible I had an ascendant over you sufficient to have accomplished this end. But I did not attempt it. I detest falsity. Deign, therefore, at least, to hear me. Consider to whom they were addressed. To Juliet, that unhappy girl, whose terrible death discovers but too plainly her mode of life. My misfortunes had thrown me into a connection with her, which I could never break through. Is not gratitude the first of duties? Juliet had assisted me, and I shall never forget it. Misconduct does not necessarily exclude generosity. This girl had honest principles, and I will never blush to say she was my friend: But a dreadful event has snatched her from me, and she is now no more.

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more. It was with justice she had incurred the anger of him, by whom she was so cruelly punished. I knew it, but yet still I loved her. It was necessary for me to assimilate my taste to hers. She would never have pardoned me, if I had concealed from her my amour, and my expectations from it. Had I made use of any expressions, which had flowed in reality from my heart, it would have been only to have mortified her. To preserve her friendship, it was necessary I should appear to her in the same light as she appeared to me. Would virtue itself exclude a complaisance so necessary to society, and whose source is in humanity? Yet by such causes our rupture has been produced. I have no views of renewing your attachment to me: I have too great a regard for your rank and name, to aspire to that honour, of which you once made me the offer. My only intention is, to vindicate myself; and though you should no longer continue your love, I would wish to have your esteem, or at least your pity. Why were you so cruel yesterday as not to vouchsafe me a hearing? What a punishment to that heart in which you alone still reign! But, alas, what have I said? Adieu.

L E T-

L E T T E R CXXI.

From the Marquis to Leonora.

Varennés, July 18.

FLATTER yourself no longer with the hopes of seducing me. My eyes are at last open. You alone were able to detach me from yourself, and you have done it. You once, I acknowledge, was dear to me; and my tenderness is not utterly extinguished. Send me an account, therefore, of your real circumstances. If you are in indigence, I will not abandon you without relief; but if you do not want my assistance, cease, I pray you, writing any further to me. I sincerely wish you the enjoyment of every happiness. I bear not the least hatred to you; and if you were to become worthy, I could even esteem you.

L E T T E R CXXII.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennés, July 24.

RESUME your tranquillity, my dear Countess, and rest satisfied. Your brother, who is the most amiable, the most honourable of men, has disclosed every thing
to

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to me, and has explained every particular of a conduct which has been so ambiguous. I will relate what he said, which will doubtless give the same pleasure to you as it did to me. He first acquainted me that Leonora was at Bains; that it was she whom we saw there about ten days since; and that the sight of her had caused an emotion which he could not controul. I once, said he, passionately loved her; and the object of such a love can never be totally indifferent to an honest heart: We may hate, we may despise, but it will still occupy our thoughts. You could not but observe the disorder into which I was thrown; and I no sooner perceived her, than I conceived a desire to speak to her. I had no intentions, however, of renewing my connection with her; I had not the least thought of so base a design: But from an impulse equally violent and inexplicable, I wished to know how she could venture again to see me, and how she could possibly justify herself. Willing to know the adventure which had brought her thither, I resolved to see her; and, lest a public meeting might have received an unfavourable construction, I chose to speak to her in private. I had some difficulty, however, to find an excuse, to assign as the motive for my departure;

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ture; and the sight of Ferval, next day, gave me fresh uneasiness. He will certainly, thought I, see Leonora, he will recollect her, and will talk publickly of her. Had I not cause, Madam, for this anxiety? — Your conjectures were well founded. The news which we received of you occasioned much affliction. —

How humiliating to me is the remembrance of such an incident! However, I will acknowledge every thing, and, by this confession, clear myself even of the appearance of guilt. I saw Leonora at the spring; we met there, and I stopped. She sat down close by me, and pretended not to see me; but when she turned her head, our eyes met each other. Unembarrassed by my indifference, she assumed an air of confidence mixed with haughtiness. I kept her there, with an appearance of disdain, and without speaking. She at last broke silence, and asked me, in a tone of irony, whether my anger still continued? Her boldness offended me, and I rose up: But she followed me with an air of fondness, which happily is no longer capable of seducing me. At length, Madam, conceiving against her a disgust worse than hatred; I left her, went home, and reflected on my former blindness, and on my happiness in escaping

escaping ruin. Here I was interrupted by this wretched girl herself, who abruptly entered the chamber. As I had never remarked in her any tendency to impudence, I acknowledge that I was surprized. I thought I could perceive, from the meanness of her apparel, that she was in indigence, and from the alteration of her features, that she was not in health. This idea stifled every sentiment except that of pity, which alone yet remains; for, I confess, my commiseration for her is stronger than it would be for any other person in the same circumstances. I desired her to withdraw; but she seized my hand with the greatest eagerness, and melted into tears. I was affected, and she discovered my emotion. However, I at last prevailed on her to depart, though with a full resolution to relieve her if she was really in want. Perhaps she has conceived some flattering expectations from that compassion which I could not conceal: I will shew you a letter which I have received from her, since my return to this place—Here your brother put it into my hands. I think nothing can possibly exceed this creature's address; but the Marquis's answer to it, which is equally filled with humanity and dignity, gave me the greatest satisfaction.

faction. Hereupon I expressed to him the sensibility and pleasure with which his confidence and firmness affected me; and even commended his pity for Leonora, since Nature hath implanted in every one a sensation of benevolence, which is to be exercised towards all. If there be any means forcible enough in themselves to reclaim from wickedness, they must be the favours of generosity, which returns good for evil; while severity, which is often revenge under the cloak of justice, confirms iniquity, by producing a hatred of mankind. I acknowledged to the Marquis, that his conduct had given me considerable uneasiness. Yet, said he, that very uneasiness I would have given any thing to have prevented; and I foresaw it from the moment I met Ferval. Pray, said he to me with great earnestness, does Miss de Ferval know any thing of Leonora's being at Bains?—On my answering him in the affirmative, he could not conceal his emotion; but when he had recovered himself he proceeded in this manner. Her brother, Madam, is the best of friends: He wants only a little more discretion. If my sister should come to any knowledge of this affair—I desired him not to be under any apprehensions, as the result from the adventure could

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could not fail of doing him great honour.—
 Alas ! said he, what opinion will be formed of me by those who are unacquainted with the circumstances ? In what light shall I appear to Miss de Ferval ? I shall not be easy till she is undeceived. My honour is interested.

At this moment a messenger arrived to acquaint me, that Miss de Ferval had been slightly indisposed, and still continued so ; but that her sisters were perfectly recovered.

Here the Marquis reminded me of the visit which I had proposed ; and he is now gone to dress. I have taken the opportunity of his absence, my dear Countess, to relieve your inquietude, and re-establish the Marquis in your esteem. He has requested me to assure you of his entire friendship ; of mine it is unnecessary to say any thing.

L E T T E R CXXIII.

From Mr. de St. Sever to Madam de Narton.

Paris, July 24.

WHAT ! does our giddy headed Marquis think to throw us into a new scene of confusion ? But I'll stop his career. Between you and I, I'll have a private meeting of all our relations, and he shall absolutely be disowned ; for we are not—you understand me.

Nay,

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Nay, I believe this would have been done before, if it had not been for Madam de St. Sever, who is better than good. She spends her whole time in tears and lamentations, and is ever conjuring me to take no steps without consulting you. Does she think I am ignorant of your sentiments, the result of so much good sense and penetration? But we cannot tell every thought which passes in your mind. May not this be her reason! — I was going, however, to give you the history of this same Leonora, since the Marquis has quitted her. Bizac — you recollect Bizac that was mentioned in her letters; she has herself been duped by him. This would-be Nobleman has turned out a mere sharper. They lived together for a month or two, every thing went on extremely well, and quite to satisfaction, till one fatal day, when the gentleman packed up the toilet and some other things, and has never been heard of since. You are to observe, by the way, that Bizac had contrived to sell off the furniture by little and little, to lessen the charge of removal. Poor Leonora was now stripped of every thing, her goods, her money, even to her very shift — Nay, she had not even a shift left. What is now to be done? said she. I will try my fortune at Bains.

The

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The Marquis is good-natured, and is not overburthened with prudence ; I will renew my acquaintance with him, and see whether I can make any thing from that quarter. She now sets off for Bains, with Juliet's mother. This Juliet has been stabbed and suffocated by her old jealous lover, who had pretty good proof that she had not confined her favours to him : But this affair was hushed up. All that is certain is, she died at his apartment about three weeks ago. Her mother, who is poor, old, and ugly, hath enlisted herself under Leonora's banner, and passes for her woman. Such is the history of this creature. In compliance with my wife's desire, who has prevented me from writing to her brother as I intended, I shall take no measure till I receive your answer. Much resolution is required in this case. Leave it to me, and you shall be satisfied. An old soldier, as I am, is not ignorant of the value of the present moment ; but Madam de Saint-Sever's delays and delicacies are quite out of place. No credit was ever given to me. — Adieu, Madam ; be assured of my respect.

LETTER CXXIV.

From Madam de Saint-Sever to Madam de Narton.

Paris, July 27.

I Have this moment, my dear friend, received your letter, which has banished every fear, and restored me to life and gladness. What a happiness, that I engaged Mr. de Saint-Sever to consult you before he proceeded any further! I beg you will conceal his intentions from my brother, of whom I fear Miss de Ferval hath conceived some disadvantageous ideas, which, however, I trust you will efface. I intreat of you, to neglect nothing that may tend to the accomplishment of our wishes. I sincerely embrace my brother; and be assured of my cordial affection for you. Let me know every circumstance that passes, I conjure you.

LETTER CXXV.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennas, Aug. 6.

I Have nothing new to communicate to you, my dear Countess, except that every thing continues

continues happy and agreeable. How fortunate it was that your brother knew nothing of Mr. de Saint-Sever's intentions ! I return him thanks for consulting me, and intreat him to rely wholly on me for what is necessary to be done. A few days ago we paid the visit, which I informed you of, to Madam de Ferval. The agitation of the Marquis, who was at once affected with joy, anxiety, and impatience, gave me the greatest pleasure. We found Madam de Ferval and her two younger daughters, who received us with their usual gracefulness and complaisance, and behaved very politely to the Marquis ; notwithstanding which, I remarked in Madam de Ferval a coldness towards him, which, as he could not but perceive it, greatly embarrassed him : And the absence of Miss de Ferval completed his affliction. I enquired after her, and asked whether we should not see her ? She has been out of order, replied her mother, the whole day, and is now gone to lie down, otherwise she would have been very glad to have seen you. But, said I, may we not wake her ? The Marquis, who was greatly disconcerted, came and whispered me, You are under no necessity, Madam, of going away so early. May we not stay till Miss de Ferval

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wakes ? I replied, that I would wait his pleasure. We continued our visit till eight in the evening, though Madam de Ferval did not once request us to stay ; an omission she would not have been guilty of, had it not been for some private reason, which it is not difficult to guess. That I might not throw the Marquis into any confusion, I made a signal to him for departure ; but he seemed to decline it. I said to Madam de Ferval, Miss will not wake time enough to let us see her. She replied, I do not think she will rise so late as this, as she is in bed. Pardon me, mamma, said Henrietta, she is not in bed — You are mistaken, child, your sister is in bed, and Madam de Narton will very readily excuse her. Henrietta was in blushes. To prevent, therefore, any further embarrassment, I rose up, and we came away accompanied by Ferval. The Marquis did not speak a syllable while we were returning ; and when we came home, he retired to his chamber, where he passed the rest of the evening, without coming to supper. The next day was employed in a solitary walk, and he appeared only at dinner, where his distraction hardly permitted him to know I was present. At length, after he had passed three days in this manner, we met together one morning ;
when,

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when, after a few minutes silence, he took me by the hand, and said, with an air of confidence and friendship that was irresistible, shall I obtain your pardon, Madam, for being a second time in love? or will you not take me for a madman? Whence, said I, can you have such apprehensions, if the object of your love is worthy of it? Worthy of it, said he: Alas! I fear I am the unworthy object. After so much noise as my foolish amour has made in the world, I ought to bid adieu to all tenderness, and I have even promised as much. As love was become odious to me, I had resolved never to think of marriage, and I had even communicated my resolutions to some friends, and to my brother-in-law himself, whom I assured that I should never marry, and that I would consider his children as my own.

And what was his answer? — He took it in jest, and told me, he hoped that this fancy would go off, and that he sincerely wishes so. But we need not at present dwell on this head, as I am satisfied nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see me happily married. My own character is in question. I confess, Madam, after having so long engrossed conversation, and after so public a

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renunciation of love, I am fearful lest that instance of it, which I now entertain, should be treated as a weakness. My choice, however, encourages me to hope otherwise; for, believe me, nothing less than the virtues, the charms, and the merit of Miss de Ferval, could have drawn from me an acknowledgement which, in any case but hers, I should have regarded as the severest mortification. You are sensible how much she deserves the affection of a worthy man: I adore her, and can no longer conceal my passion from myself or you. At first, indeed, I was mistaken in the sentiments I entertained for her, and (so great was my disgust to that passion, which had been so unfortunate to me,) had I suspected I could again have yielded to love, I would have banished myself from her presence. To speak the truth, I had conceived a very great dislike to women in general. After my rupture with Leonora, I was introduced into what was called better company; but it appeared to me in so contemptible a light, that, judging of the whole sex from those I saw, I thought women in general could not be sufficiently despised. It was after this disgust, and the uneasiness which my amours with Leonora had given rise to, that I made
my

my resolution, which, as I have told you, I imparted to all my acquaintance, by some of whom it was approved. Others blamed it, by arguments taken from the convenience of marriage; and these told me, that love was no way necessary for making it reasonable or decent. A third party, among whom was Mr. de Saint-Sever, turned it into ridicule, and told me, that such vows should never be made by a heart so susceptible as mine. These I was most offended with, and, therefore, made it a capital point with myself to manifest the steadiness of my resolution. I was in this situation when I first came to your house, where I mistook that pleasure which I found in the company of Miss de Ferval as a happy return to liberty; my attachment I regarded as friendship and confidence; and I considered her only as a companion. When I returned from Bains, and did not find her here, I first perceived how necessary she was to me; and ever since we were at Madam de Ferval's, I have been sensible that she alone can make me happy. A false shame, perhaps; sentiments to be discovered, which I had never suspected; the sight of love in all its charms, after having viewed it under the aspect of terror; the thought of marriage, of which I detested the

idea, and which is now become the object of every desire ; all this variety of imagination hath absorbed me for these three days past ; till at last I decided in favour of the merit, the virtue, and accomplishments of Miss de Ferval. I know not whether it be love which now impells me to speak ; but were I to hesitate longer, I should be culpable.

You would, indeed, my dear Marquis, said I, to resist the united charms of virtue and beauty. Do not oppose a sentiment which will not only make you happy, but give pleasure to every one who is interested in your welfare. That false shame which you experienced, for it is a false one, is the only weakness I reproach you with. Such an union will infallibly fulfill every wish of your sister and Mr. de Saint-Sever : I am certain of it, from their greatness of soul and their attachment to you. Such of your acquaintance as are rational and virtuous, will speak of you as of a man restored from sickness to health. He was forming, they will say, the most unhappy projects, at the most dangerous crisis, when Love became the instrument of Reason, to light him in his way, and conduct him to happiness. If you are condemned only by the immoral part of mankind, you will receive satisfaction from
their

their disapprobation, by reflecting, that your choice hath produced a new difference with them. I am not at all surprized at the disgust you conceived against us, though, perhaps, it had not a foundation. Leonora, and those other women whom you had seen, thanks to Heaven, are by no means a sample of the whole sex; as unhappily, on the other hand, every woman is not a Miss de Ferval. Among men, as well as among us, some are virtuous and some vicious; we are not, therefore, to judge of the whole by a part. Your first passion was unfortunate and disgraceful, because the object of it was unworthy and contemptible. Your present choice will, in the eyes of the public, repair those injuries you have done yourself; and when, they shall see your love for Miss de Ferval, they will never recollect your passion for Leonora. In the opinion of every honest man, this last choice will be as honourable to you, as the former was degrading. Your heart is nevertheless the same. You cannot conceive for this adorable girl sentiments more noble or more virtuous than those which you had for Leonora, at that period of time when you would have married her. This shews the importance of making a proper choice. It is not the sensation of love which is criminal;

 this

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this was one of the finest gifts of nature, and in a great soul it may become the source of the greatest and most virtuous actions, provided the object be worthy of it. If, on the other hand, it be unworthy, the same passion will become a source of vices, and will be productive of the basest and most dishonourable actions, and even of despair. But you will enjoy that purity of happiness, the satisfaction of all your friends, and possess that inexpressible charm which Miss de Ferval will diffuse over your whole life. Oh ! my dear Marquis, what a felicity must it be, to receive the applause of every sensible heart ! for, whatever pleasures love may procure for us, I cannot help regarding the public approbation as necessary to that inward satisfaction, without which some degree of bitterness will always remain; and it must certainly be very disagreeable to be perpetually obliged to vindicate our conduct, without a hope of forgiveness. Every happiness will be centered in you. Miss de Ferval, in point of fortune, indeed —

I feel already, said he interrupting me, the greatest satisfaction. How happier still should I be to become so far the object of her affections, that no reluctance may arise on her part to what would be the completion of my wishes,

You

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You need not, said I, be under any apprehension. That rank and fortune which you will bestow on her, however brilliant and unexpected, she will not consider as any humiliation. As she is a stranger to every emotion of pride, they will produce in her that sensation only, which is so pleasing to a delicate mind, the sensation of gratitude.

Alas! said he, no one can be more sensible of the value of her intellectual qualities than myself. But will she not despise me? I fear she will. Fortune and its advantages will be of little weight with her; and from my former errors, added to this last adventure, the circumstances of which she does not know, it is possible I may appear unworthy of uniting my welfare with hers. You can scarcely conceive the uneasiness this reflection has given me, or how great would be my despair if I should be so contemptible to her.

Take courage, Marquis. You seem to distrust yourself. Will you not, however, confide in another? Will you not entrust me with the negotiation? He thanked me, and said he found my mediation was become necessary; but that it was with much regret he resigned the pleasure of informing Miss de Ferval, in his
own

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own person of his affection for her. I told him, I would first communicate this matter to Madam de Ferval.

Alas! said he, this method is decent, I allow; but it is neither delicate nor natural. I love, and wish to be loved: Were the affection not reciprocal, the consideration that I had been the means of making this amiable girl unhappy, by a compliance with what was disagreeable to her, would drive me to despair. Do not, replied I, entertain any such thoughts of Madam de Ferval, who could never have inspired so much virtue and dignity of sentiment into her daughters, had she not possessed them herself. The choice of a husband, I will answer for it, will remain in their own breast: Their excellent mother would, by prudence of management, prevent an improper marriage; but, be assured, she will never compel them to accept any man whom they do not approve.

At last, my dear Countess, he committed to me his dearest and most important interests. Accordingly, I lost not a moment of time, but wrote immediately to Madam de Ferval, whom I intend to see to-morrow, and whose answer I have received, which, together with my own letter, I have inclosed. The Marquis, who
I believe

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I believe intends writing to you, has desired me to impart the substance of our conversation. Adieu.

LETTER CXXVI.

From the Marquis to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Varennnes, Aug. 6.

YOU have, I presume, my dearest sister, been informed of every thing by Madam de Narton, in whose bosom, as in that of the most valuable of friends, I have deposited every secret. I am persuaded, from that sincere interest which you have ever had for my welfare, that you participate in those sentiments which neither honour, reason, nor virtue blush to avow. Assure Mr. de Saint-Sever of my regard. I acknowledge he saw better into futurity than myself; but at that time I was not acquainted with Miss de Ferval. Let me have your best wishes; they will hasten the accomplishment of my felicity.

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LETTER CXXVII.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Ferval.

Varennés, Aug. 6.

THAT esteem and friendship, Madam, which I shall ever entertain for you, have prevailed on me to accept, with the greatest pleasure, the commission with which the Marquis de Roselle hath entrusted me. Sensible of the merit and accomplishments of Miss de Ferval, he hath requested me to acquaint you, that his happiness would be completed in obtaining the esteem of this adorable girl, and the honour of calling you by the name of mother. Such were his words, which I have faithfully noted down, and which imply every thing that can be said. His welfare is in your hands. With respect to fortune, nothing remains to be settled: His own is sufficient, and he is no stranger to the value of a virtuous mind. Could he have ventured so far, before he had asked her hand from you, he would have demanded of herself *a heart whose flame was mutual with his own*; but his respect, which is equalled only by his love, induced him to forbear. They know each other; and no cause exists to retard their union. If, therefore,

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fore, this proposal, as I hope it will, should meet with your approbation, it may be consummated without delay; and the utmost wishes of the Marquis, as well as of myself, will be accomplished. Such an event, as it will complete the happiness of Mr. de Roselle, I am certain will not leave that of Miss de Ferval imperfect. Adieu, my dear Madam. I wait your answer with an impatience hardly inferior to that of the Marquis.

LETTER CXXVIII.

From Madam de Ferval to Madam de Narton.

Vercourt, Aug. 7-

IT is with the utmost gratitude, Madam, I return you thanks for interesting yourself so greatly in my daughter's welfare. I could almost venture, from this regard alone, to rest her whole happiness in that union which you have proposed. But pardon a mother's fears. This alliance is far above what I could ever hope. I am sensible there are few parents in my place who would not have been transported with joy; but, Madam, I never sought for my daughter an establishment valuable only for rank or interest;

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terest; these do not imply happiness: Even with the best of qualities, accompanied with love and fortune, a woman may not be happy. There have been marriages, where, though esteem was mutual, misery was mutual also. The Marquis de Roselle has sense and accomplishments; he is amiable, and was born to please. But, as my daughter's welfare is so nearly concerned, permit me to ask: Hath he that solid virtue, that steadiness of principle, without which he cannot be a good husband? Is that unhappy passion, which he once conceived, effaced from his heart? I confess, Madam, I fear it is not; and it was with some surprize I read your last letter. You are not ignorant he hath seen Leonora at Bains. If he has offered his hand to my daughter merely from chagrin or anger, consider, Madam, how great a misfortune such a marriage would be. Before every other consideration, it is necessary we should know the situation of his heart. If his hatred to Leonora be carried to extremity, it would be with reluctance I could give him my daughter: Such a hatred would be a passion the more terrible as it is disguised. If, on the other side, in his cooler moments he despises her, if his mind is detached from her, if he can see her with-

out

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out emotion, and is indifferent about her, I shall have better expectations. But does he know the worth of real virtue? or may he not have been captivated by beauty alone, without any regard to the inward qualities of the heart. To such a sensibility and delicacy as my daughter possesses, a greater calamity could scarcely happen than to be united to a husband, who, unable to distinguish any intellectual accomplishments, should perceive only those which are merely external: And it is to be feared, that, after so many irregularities, it is to these only the Marquis is now attached. My utmost desire is, to obtain for her a husband, tender, virtuous, prudent, and sensible of her merit; one with whom she might enjoy the pleasures of confidence and friendship as well as love. I will confide in you, from an equal conviction of your ability and discretion, as of your affection to my daughter. As I am satisfied you have an opportunity of discovering the real sentiments of the Marquis, I will rely on your representation of them, and shall accept, with the greatest joy, the honour you intend us; but I shall forbear mentioning any thing of it to my daughter, till I receive your answer. In the present cir-

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I

circumstances

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cumstances it would be very improper for me to wait on you at your own house ; but as we intend to return to Ferval, I should regard it as a great obligation to receive a visit from you to-morrow at that place. I would mean, to excuse the company of the Marquis and my son. We may then treat more explicitly of this matter, and come to such a resolution as we shall see most proper.

My son is this moment arrived here. The Marquis, I find, has mentioned his intention to him. I have strictly forbidden him to reveal any thing of it to his sister, but I tremble lest he should, as he seems in such transports of joy, and cannot conceive, he says, any reasons for my hesitation.—However, I shall send him back to you as soon as possible, that he may not betray the secret ; and I am going to my daughter, to prevent any opportunity of a private conversation. Adieu, madam ; words are wanting to express my gratitude.

L E T-

L E T T E R CXXIX.

*From Leonora to the Marquis.**Bains, Aug. 8.*

I Have so many times, sir, deceived you, that truth itself is suspected when it comes from me; but I once more conjure you to hear, to believe, and to pity me. The truth is now a sufficient mortification, and is extorted from me by the wretchedness of my present situation. Punishment hath overtaken my vices, and I have no hope left but in your generosity. Alas, sir! the wicked work the ruin of each other, and, though unwillingly, vindicate the cause of virtue. A profligate villain—But you will excuse me from reciting a tale as melancholy as it is shameful. It would hurt you too much. An honest mind cannot but be affected with the history of guilt. Let it suffice to say, I was become destitute of every resource but the liberality of Juliet, and of this likewise I have been deprived by her death; since which time I have been afflicted both with sickness and poverty. Unknowing what measures to take, what heart to interest in my favour, I at last implored the compassion of Mr. de Valville, who had once been my captive. I went to

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him, indeed, without any sanguine hopes ; but his behaviour was cruel. After the most barbarous reproaches on me, for feeding that violence of passion which you entertained, he was going to send me away ; but, after a moment's reflection, asked me, whether I would promise never to repeat the like indiscretion ? Of this I gave him an absolute promise. He then told me, that though he had nothing to give me, he could assist me by advice. The Marquis, said he, is gone to Bains, to drink the waters, and is there fallen in love with a girl, whom perhaps he may be ridiculous enough to marry. Now if you can detach him from this amour, you will atone for what you have already done, and at the same time may possibly again obtain him for yourself. Only be content to be his mistress ; he is generous, and will pay with honour. But remember, if ever he shall discover the least intention of marrying you, I will be severely revenged on you. You may, however, make use of every art that you think will be agreeable to him. — His barbarity almost overcame me, but I thanked him, though with reluctance. I went immediately, and sold all the cloaths I had, except one gown, to defray the expence of my journey, in which I was accompanied
by

by the mother of that unhappy girl, whose death plunged me in the depth of misery. Supported only by the hope of assistance from you, we came hither; and on my arrival I followed the advice which Mr. de Valville had given me. Shall I obtain forgiveness? It was my only resource. I have since informed him of the difficulties I met with; but in his answer he forbade me troubling him; and told me, that as my difficulties must be owing to my own want of address, he declined interesting himself any farther in my affairs. I have enclosed you, sir, his letter. My sincerity could not dispense with this humiliating voucher. Tho' overwhelmed with grief and indigence, I hesitated eight days before I ventured to write; and nothing but my present terrible situation could have prevailed on me to have recourse to your kindness. I have not the smallest sum of money remaining, and am even in debt for my subsistence since I have been here. I am afflicted with illness, and the physician, who out of compassion visits me, thinks it will be of some continuance. It is to the goodness of my landlord I am indebted for the bed I lie on, and the nourishment which sustains me. Shall I flatter myself, sir, with the hopes of your commiseration. The Curate of the place hath, indeed,

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promised me his endeavour to procure me an admission into one of the Asylums of Indigence and Pain. But can I accept so humiliating an offer? No. I could sooner resign my life. May my present punishment in some measure atone for my former life; may the veil of oblivion be cast over my former life, and may my present unhappy circumstances be alone considered. — It is a wretch, the sport of calamity, who implores your benevolence. It is Leonora, the guilty Leonora; behold her at your feet, with tears gushing from her eyes; behold her torn with remorse, a victim to punishment and almost to death. You have shewn yourself generous. After therefore having made so many sacrifices for my sake, shall I entreat you to make one more, one which will never call for repentance, the sacrifice of a just resentment? Whatever injury I may have been the cause of, it is perhaps a duty you owe to yourself, to assist her whom once you loved. But I am not a stranger to your heart. I know it stands in no need of motives merely personal to be excited to acts of goodness. I still hope, and hope in you. You may confide in the woman who is the bearer of this letter. Unhappy Leonora! Is it from you, sir, she must receive a bounty? Insupportable thought!

L E T -

LETTER CXXX.

*From the Marquis to Leonora.**Varennas, Aug. 8.*

WHY did you not sooner acquaint me with your distress, after I had offered my assistance? I have sent five and twenty louis d'ors, which is all I can do at present. I am satisfied since you have informed me of the real motive of your journey.

I pity your situation; tho' your application is at an improper time. But it is to myself only I can impute my troubles.

LETTER CXXXI.

*From Madam de Narton to the Marquis.**Ferval, Aug. 8.*

IAM obliged, my dear Marquis, to break through my promise of returning this evening. I continue here, and, in consequence of the invitation with which Madam de Ferval hath charged me, shall expect to see you here likewise. I leave it to you, to draw what consequences you think proper.

LETTER CXXXII.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Ferval, Aug. 8. Midnight.

WHY, my dear Countess, are you not here, to partake in the general joy? You alone are wanting to complete our happiness. It is sufficient to tell you, that we are all now at Madam de Ferval's, that a perfect *eclaircissement* has been made, and that our every wish is fulfilled. After an explanation to this excellent parent, of the Marquis's conduct, in which I described the real qualities of his heart in all their truth, I had the satisfaction of beholding pleasure once more sparkling in her eyes. She then left me, in order to communicate the joyful news to her daughter, and in about half an hour they both entered the room. Madam de Ferval was in that delicate, that affecting situation, in which tears only can express our gladness; while Miss de Ferval, weeping likewise and covered with blushes, was lost in the embraces of her mother, without the power of utterance. After some time, recollecting the Marquis, I expressed an intention of departure, that I might communicate his happiness to him. Madam
de

de Ferval, after casting her eyes on her daughter, who was looking only towards the ground, said to me, What occasion can you have for going? It would be more agreeable if the Marquis could come here. — So it would, indeed, mamma, replied Miss de Ferval, concealing her face in the bosom of her mother. — Yes, child, he shall be sent for, that we may all be witnesses of so joyful an event. — I immediately, my dear Countess, sent word to your brother, who came on the wings of love. I will not endeavour to describe, as it would be impossible, the various emotions visible on the face of Miss de Ferval, while we were in expectation of him. Joy was plainly perceptible through all her modesty and agitation. But when, at length, we saw him entering the extremity of the avenue, this amiable girl was seized with so violent a palpitation of the heart, that she fell back on a settee, and almost fainted away. We were all employed in giving our assistance when the Marquis came up, whom I went out to receive. His emotion was not less than that of Miss de Ferval, and he scarcely attended to one word I said. Madam de Ferval, whose presence of mind is at all times the same, justly supposing that this first interview would make too great an impression

pression on young persons, had ordered the two younger sisters, who were entire strangers to the whole matter, to withdraw. The Marquis, when he entered the parlour, endeavoured to pay a compliment to Madam de Ferval, but she interrupted him by an embrace, and presented her daughter to him. Modesty on the one part, respect on the other, added to our presence, contributed to an embarrassment which was affecting beyond description. I then proposed that we might take a turn or two in the garden, and we were accompanied by the two younger Misses. When the Marquis offered his hand to Madam de Ferval, she desired that compliment might be given to her daughter, who, with some little confusion, accepted it. We contrived, as if without intention, to separate ourselves from them. I know not what they said to each other, but they continued walking so late, that we were obliged to desire them to come in ; and their appearance was that of the highest satisfaction and tranquillity. The Marquis, when he introduced Miss de Ferval at their return, pressed her hand with the highest rapture, and their felicity seems to be complete. Ferval, who was gone on a hunting party when my message came to the Marquis, is now arrived,

and

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and is in transports. He was impatient that the whole family should be immediately informed of the event, but his mother prevailed on him to stay awhile, as nothing inconsistent with the highest delicacy ought to be transacted when his sister was in question. However, we have just now informed the two younger sisters, whose joy is so pure and so tender, that it would be impossible to remain unmoved by it. Helena asked her mamma, whether they were going to lose their sister? but Henrietta expressed herself only by tears. They afterwards joined in a delicacy of sentiment, at their age much to be admired: Let us not, said they, mention our own sorrow in being separated from her. She will be happy; let us not therefore be the means of diminishing her happiness. This surely is friendship in all its purity.

As the Marquis's time is now so precious to him, he has desired me to plead his excuse for not writing himself to you; and entreats both you and Mr. de Saint-Sever to make the necessary preparations for the wedding, the contract of which is to be signed to-morrow. Adieu, my dear Countess, and be assured of the regard which is entertained for you by us all.

L E T-

L E T T E R CXXXIII.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint-Sever,

Ferval, Aug. 10.

YESTERDAY, my dear friend, our contract was signed: I must call it ours, for we are all included in it. I cannot express my joy at a scene of so much happiness; the tenderness of a mother, a daughter, a son, on the one hand; love and virtue on the other! What a felicity! As soon as the articles were signed, the Marquis asked Miss de Ferval, whether she would choose that the jewels he intended on the occasion should be brought to her, or wait till she should have the opportunity of pleasing herself better at Paris? The question being unexpected, she only desired that he would put himself to no trouble on that head, as it was quite a matter of indifference; but the Marquis still insisting on an answer, Madam de Ferval intreated him to delay the purchase till they should go to Paris. Well, then, said the Marquis, we will stay awhile; but I hope we shall be accompanied by the two other young ladies. I must beg their excuse, replied Madam de Ferval; their wedding is not to be celebrated quite so soon.—

I cannot

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I cannot possibly marry three at once, said the Marquis, smiling ; but they are at least my sisters ; and as a pledge of our friendship, I must intreat them frankly to tell me what present would be least unworthy their acceptance. Nothing, Sir, replied Henrietta, with her usual vivacity, can ever be unacceptable, from one who possesses so great a share of our gratitude and esteem. Helena returned her thanks with a sincerity all her own, desiring he would set some bounds to his generosity. At last the Marquis recurred to my advice ; and the result was, that he should make a present to each of a pair of ear-rings. If this favour, replied Madam de Ferval, cannot be dispensed with, one pair will be fully sufficient ; because one of my daughters may succeed to her sister's trinkets. This was no sooner spoken than a very visible confusion was observed in Miss de Ferval. Madam de Ferval could not conceal her surprize, and Henrietta rising in haste and embracing her sister ; If it would be the least uneasiness to you, said she to her, to part with them, I desire you will still keep them : We cannot think of depriving you of any thing that can give you any pleasure. Ferval, after casting his eyes towards his sister, was in equal embarrassment, and I confess I
did

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did not know what to think myself. I almost began to entertain suspicions unfavourable to this young lady, till her brother, in direct contradiction to his sister's tokens for silence, rose from his seat, and explained to us the mystery. This inestimable girl had made a sacrifice, which nothing but the utmost greatness and delicacy of sentiment could have dictated: The three hundred louis d'ors, by which Ferval had prevailed on Martha and Juliet's woman to deliver up the letters of Leonora, were repayed by the sale of his sister's diamond necklace*; and to confirm what he said, he shewed us the letter she wrote to him on the occasion, of which I send you a copy†. You may judge what impression was made on us all by this acknowledgment. Madam de Ferval could not help reproaching her daughter, though in the tenderest manner, for concealing so honourable an action. I must beg your forgiveness, my dear mamma; I was not unacquainted with the goodness of your heart, and doubted not

* It appears by the sister's letter, as, indeed, by the tenour of the present, that it was not a necklace, but a pair of ear-rings; so that either Madam de Narton, or the editor of these letters, hath made a little mistake.

† This letter has been inserted in its proper place, vol. I. pag. 181—4.

but

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but the avowal would have met with your applause; but I was unwilling to lay you under an engagement of restoring to me what I had deprived myself of, at least at that time, tho' I intended, at some future season, to acquaint you with it. Since my acquaintance, however, with the Marquis, the secret became more important, and the discovery would have been improper both to him and you. The poor Marquis, whose self-humiliation was exceeded only by his sense of gratitude, had neither the power of speech nor motion; but covering his face with his hands, threw himself at the feet of Miss de Ferval, who with difficulty prevailed on him to rise. I could not have imagined, said he, recovering himself, my love and esteem for you could have been carried beyond what I before experienced; but from this last point of view in which you appear to me, I am convinced no limits can be set to them. In what manner too, said he, addressing himself to Ferval, shall I express myself to you, whose friendship and virtue have been so remarkably conspicuous, whose blood hath flowed not for my sake only, but by these very hands. Was it necessary that your sister's generosity should be added to your own? The remembrance of it embitters my joy. Can you,

said

said he to Miss de Ferval, cast a veil of oblivion over my weakness at that period, when you were so great ? Here tears interrupted him, and he could say no more. Miss de Ferval endeavoured, in vain, to change the topic of discourse, in which Leonora was next introduced. On this the Marquis, who took occasion to repeat what I had already acquainted Madam de Ferval with, shewed us a letter, which he received from that wretched girl the very day I came hither, and which had occasioned that embarrassment in which he appeared when he just arrived. She there describes her deplorable situation, her sickness, and her distress ; and says, it was by the advice of Valville that she came to Bains, to try again to seduce the Marquis, and prevent his marriage. The Marquis sent her five and twenty louis d'ors, but his answer was very cool. Miss de Ferval thought it rather severe, and could not help pitying her, altho' the Marquis represented how improper it would have been for him, under such circumstances, to have spoken with more kindness. Miss de Ferval, however, has so far prevailed, that a message is to be sent to Bains, to engage the people, with whom Leonora lodges, not to let her go before a week is expired. Miss de Ferval has certainly
some

some good purpose in view. In the next place, she was very anxious to know who Mr. de Valville was. The Marquis told her he was an old acquaintance, but that he could not give him the name of a friend, though he had some regard for him. He acknowledged that he thought him, for a great while, an excellent person to advise with, in respect to his conduct; but that his mode of life, being libertine, insensibly led him astray. He then related all that he knew about this gentleman; and, after many intreaties, shewed likewise some of his letters. I had the curiosity to read some of them, and I think they are truly originals. Nothing surely ever so fully displayed a wickedness of heart and a littleness of soul; accompanied with just sense enough to support the foppery of the day, and to make vice seem agreeable. Miss de Ferval received this detail with the greatest astonishment, and said to the Marquis; Although, sir, I have no title to any additional favours from you, yet there is one which I must venture to request, that you will renounce every connection with a man so thoroughly abandoned; for, to become the Apostle of Vice, he must be abandoned to the very last degree. But do not mistake

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me, said she smiling, I am not actuated by any principle of revenge. I am pretty certain this Mr. de Valville has not any knowledge of me, and I flatter myself you have no suspicions that I am jealous of his approbation. I will not derogate from what merit he may possess; his friendship for you may probably have been the purest and sincerest of which his heart was capable; but as we are all amenable to the judgment of others, who will decide on our own disposition from the company we keep, I presume you would be unwilling that a man of his character should be ranked among the number of your friends. — To this the Marquis replied, that man, shall never be called a friend of mine, who is not a friend also to the Marchioness de Roselle.

Adieu, my dear Countess. As Madam de Ferval and her whole family intend to accompany the bride and bridegroom to Paris, it is your brother's request that you will make the necessary dispositions for their reception. We shall have no expectations of hearing from you till we receive word in form, that every thing is in readiness. My impatience to see the completion of this happy union is, I am certain, hardly inferior to that of the Marquis; of my affection to whom this must be given as
a proof.

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a proof. To you, I need not repeat any assurances of friendship.

LETTER CXXXIV.

From Madam de Saint-Sever to the Marquis.

Paris, Aug. 18.

MY dear Brother; I congratulate you on the accomplishment at once of your own happiness, and of every wish I entertained. I return my sincere thanks to Heaven, by which so fortunate a destiny has been reserved for you. The possession of a virtuous and agreeable wife is the greatest of blessings. All my answer for this day to Madam de Narton, will consist of the deeds and instruments which remain to finish the work, in conformity to that impatience which her friendship entertains. The Count, who embraces you, is under the same uneasiness with myself, that he is unable to be a personal witness of your happiness; but this pleasure, which I wish for with so much ardency, will not be long delayed. I am preparing every thing for our meeting.

L E T T E R CXXXV.

From the Marquis to Madam de Saint-Sever.

Ferval, Aug. 26.

I Am just come from the altar, and am the happiest of men. Madam de Narton has undertaken to inform you of the circumstances. Miss de Ferval—What am I saying?—the Marchioness de Roselle embraces you. Adieu. I know not what I write; but be assured of my affection.

L E T T E R CXXXVI.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de St. Sever.

Ferval, Aug. 27.

YESTERDAY, my dear Countess, was the happy day which completed your brother's felicity. We received your packet the day before, and all was in readiness. On this occasion, so affectionate and sensible a conversation passed between Madam de Ferval and her daughter, that I think myself under an obligation to communicate it to you; and I dare say you will prefer it to the most lively description of the wedding. In this I could
not

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not describe any scenes of magnificence ; but no magnificence can come in competition with the unadulterated pleasures of innocence.

You are now, said this excellent parent to her daughter, entering into a state of life unknown to you before. From the Marquis's attachment to you, his virtues, and his character, I have not the least doubt with respect to your happiness ; but the means of preserving this happiness, and that affection which is the basis of it, must not be neglected, You have hitherto, my dear, lived only with me, and have been accustomed to a life of tranquillity and ease, in which my caresses constituted your utmost felicity. I have the pleasing reflection, that they were never undeservedly bestowed, and that you have faithfully discharged your duty. But you are to consider, that this duty was simple and easy ; that your happiness depended on yourself alone ; and that, having done whatever was required of you, you had no further anxiety. Caprice, obstinacy, and all the train of passions which have been manifested by those of the same family in which you yourself have lived, it has never been your lot to combat. You were apprized only that I had a regard to

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every thing which passed, and that I frankly gave my applause to whatever deserved it. But this kind of encouragement is very flattering. A mother, who is really tender, lives only for her children; when she beholds their good qualities, it is with a species of enthusiasm; when she discovers their faults, her reproof is mixed with indulgence. A husband, on the other hand, does not see the same actions in the same point of view. His disposition must be studied and carefully attended to. A woman, especially if she be a wife, is expected to possess good-nature, complaisance, an assiduity arising from tenderness, and all those qualities which produce confidence and attachment. I have not, my dear, the least doubt but your heart is endowed with all these requisites; But are you certain you can accommodate them to circumstances the most grievous and discouraging? Can you bear up under disgust, anger, and perhaps contempt? Frame to yourself the idea of a wife, affectionate, virtuous, and sensible, who, after every effort to please, is at last exposed to the ill-treatment of a husband; she never has the satisfaction of receiving approbation for actions the most commendable; she is even obliged to conceal them, and, for her own safety, to
 appear

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appear in fault ; she hides her calamity from the world, and mourns only in secret ; and thus making a perpetual sacrifice of her inclination, she endeavours to take on herself the blame of those faults which she could not prevent. Though she is guided only by those rules which virtue and reason inspire, her virtue is unapproved, and her reason unattended to ; and yet though every solicitude and indulgence, of themselves almost persuasive, are ineffectual to the purpose desired, she still endeavours that nothing of this domestic uneasiness shall be observed by others, and that her husband may at least appear a man of sense and principle. How great, how respectable a character is this ! But how unhappy must such a woman be ? Do you possess such fortitude ?

I hope, mamma, I shall never experience so cruel a situation. — I have the greatest reason to think, replied Madam de Ferval, you will not ; the good sense, the virtue, and the affection of the Marquis de Rosette, give me the most flattering hopes. Let the comparison, however, you will have the opportunity of drawing, between your own circumstances and those of other women as deserving as yourself, teach you to set a proper value on the

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happiness you enjoy, and to prevent every thing that has a tendency to diminish it. Far be it from me to take pleasure in your terror or uneasiness; this would be a wantonness of cruelty; but I would have you reflect on the necessity of being prepared even for the worst. Dispositions are by no means unchangeable; even the best may, by events not to be foreseen, become untoward; and love does not always continue with the same fervency. In this case, the only resources which remain to a good wife are patience and fortitude. If you should ever perceive in your husband a diminution of tenderness; if you should ever discover that he withdraws from you his confidence, or that he places it on another; then let your cares, your attention to him be redoubled. Be not too prodigal of caresses to him, which at such a time might be troublesome. Give him an opportunity to discover your affectionate uneasiness on his account; but, whatever may happen, I charge you never to reproach him; for reproaches, let them be ever so polite, ever so cautiously worded, may make a wound in his heart which never can be healed. If through any calamity, of which I cannot support the idea, and which will assuredly never happen, your
husband's

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husband's affections should be transferred to some other object — Alas ! my dear mother, I could not live under so afflicting a circumstance ; but as I could not but still love him, I would employ every tender assiduity, I would do my utmost to regain his affection, and would try even to make him think I was not sensible of my misfortunes — These, replied Madam de Ferval, are very good resolutions ; nevertheless there are circumstances which will not admit of such dissimulation ; which require a silent sadness, without complaint, without bitterness. In such a conjuncture, an air of disdain or gaiety would be unseasonable ; and would shew either dissipation or pride. Under such a misfortune, a virtuous and tender wife cannot but be afflicted and mortified, and sentiments so natural need not be concealed, as they pay a compliment to the husband, who cannot be unaffected by them. Never let any thing severe or ironical fall from you in his hearing, either with respect to himself or the object he is attached to. The best method is to avoid speaking at all on such topics. There is, I know, a resource which some women recur to, but it is a dangerous one ; I mean coquetry : They hope to accomplish their intentions by means of jealousy.

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jealousy. But these women, by adding the loss of esteem to the loss of love, defeat their own schemes, and deprive themselves of every hope of reformation.

What situation is more pitiable than that of a virtuous woman united to a man who is jealous? The best method, however, she can have recourse to, is to retire from the world, to arm herself with mildness and patience, and, above all, to forbear complaining. This situation is terrible, and I hope you will never experience it. But, my dear, how happy soever your union may be, it is not to be supposed that some little clouds of dissension will not arise. Two persons cannot always, and on every point, be of the same opinion; when virtue, therefore, is not injured by conforming to the opinion of another, and when reason does not oppose what a husband requires, it is our part to yield, and to sacrifice our own sentiments to peace, and to that submission to which we were born. To inculcate into girls a notion, that by marrying they become their own mistresses, is dreadful. They should be rather told, that by marriage they contract a still greater dependence, and they should be taught the means of rendering this dependence agreeable, and of cementing the union. We
have

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have but one privilege, that of making remonstrances; this is really our own, and it is incumbent on us to know how to use it. When once a wife possesses her husband's confidence, and deserves it, her power is not inconsiderable. To give up the point with cheerfulness in those less important matters which interest ourselves alone; to reserve that influence we have over an husband to those greater occasions, wherein a deviation from rectitude would be most dangerous; to endeavour, without seeming to aim at conviction, to convince him of an error, by that mode of persuasion which is dictated by reason and presented with all the graces of love and mildness; to be able to do this, is to possess a charm by which we shall obtain such an empire as is most to be preferred, but of which no boast must be made. In the management of a family, which is more peculiarly our province, we may use our authority with less restraint; but in those affairs of consequence, in which a husband is supposed to be chiefly concerned, we must never think of claiming the honour, even though we may have borne the greatest part. There are, however, some particular cases which I must except, though I cannot foresee.

Thus

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Thus you may perceive, my dear child, that marriage is a state of cares and sacrifices, and, without that inward sentiment which renders every thing easy, it is a task of difficulty even for Virtue herself to fulfil the duties of it. There is no doubt that the obligations are reciprocal ; but there are likewise particular attentions which are incumbent on us alone. Nature, by imparting to us a greater share of gracefulness, delicacy, and beauty, hath taught us, that it is our part to throw every assiduity, complaisance, and regard into the fund of that commerce, from which we gain in exchange the protection and the more important labours of the men. As courage is the characteristic of one sex, so is gentleness that of the other ; and gentleness is never resisted by courage. To reign, we must first obey ; and to enjoy greater things, we must submit ourselves to the less. We are not to afflict ourselves if our assiduities should not always be returned ; men are less susceptible than we are. Were they equally susceptible with us, wherein would our advantage consist ? They are occupied in more important concerns ; but our primary object should be the art of pleasing. Though this implies a regard to every delicate assiduity, yet coquetry is on no account to be employed :

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employed : To the world it is contemptible, to an husband it is indecent. I do not mean to censure that innocent art, whose sole end is a cultivation of affection, and of which the neglect would be imprudent at least, if not blameable. But on this head, my dear, I can give no directions but what are general and vague — Be assured, mamma, said Miss de Ferval, that in every circumstance your advice shall be recurred to, and your orders obeyed — My orders ! By no means. From the moment of your marriage my authority ceases ; and your husband alone can claim your obedience — Surely, mamma ! — Do not be uneasy, my dear child. Your mother will always be your friend, an affectionate friend, one who can give consolation and perhaps assistance. It is a happiness to you, that I am not ignorant of the extent of my power. Were a mother to require any thing contrary to the husband's inclination, no hesitation need be made ; he alone is to be obeyed in every case where honour and virtue permit. Accustom yourself, therefore, to this idea of obedience, which is the best support at those periods when imperiousness is assumed, and from which, even if it should engage you to more than your duty requires, nothing but good conse-

consequences can result. I have too good an opinion of the Marquis's understanding, politeness, affection, and esteem, to suppose he will ever behave in a despotic manner; but as this must on your part be considered as an obligation, it should be an additional motive for your gratitude.

The Marquis's presence here interrupting us, I could not help saying to him, with a smile, that I was certain he did not know how much he was indebted to Madam de Ferval, for the excellent lessons she had been giving her daughter. What lessons, replied the Marquis, can Miss de Ferval stand in need of? Love is surely the best of masters? But, continued he, with an air of the greatest delicacy and sweetness, this would be perhaps to presume too much. I dare not flatter myself, that her passion is in every respect so fervent as mine.

I could hardly have thought, replied Madam de Ferval, you could have entertained such a doubt; but it shall be soon removed by the most convincing proof. She then put into the Marquis's hands a letter, which her daughter wrote during her stay at Varennes, wherein she discloses to her mother her own passion
before

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before the Marquis's was known. This declaration manifested so much candor, virtue, and tenderness, that you can scarcely conceive the effect it had on us, particularly the Marquis, whose transport was beyond description. I need not inform you, after this description, how agreeably the evening was terminated.

Yesterday being the wedding-day, all the country folks from the neighbouring villages came to pay their homage; the men with fire-arms, drums, and musick, and the women adorned with flowers. Thus escorted, our lovers were conducted to the altar, where the Priest and all who were present shed tears of joy during the ceremony, and from whence we returned with the same attendants. On this occasion Madam de Ferval caused ribbands to be given away among the poor people; and to those who were in distress, money was distributed. Tables were likewise placed under the trees in the court before the castle, at which every one might partake. Madam de Ferval is perfectly adored for her benevolence and generosity. If any poor tenant on her estate has more than four children, she takes charge of all above that number; who are taken care of,

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of, cloathed, and instructed at her expence. Nor is her goodness confined to this one instance: The aged and the sick equally, though in secret, participate of it. As Miss de Ferval has likewise borne a considerable part in these agreeable labours, she had the satisfaction of receiving the warmest effusions of gratitude, accompanied with the sincerest wishes for the welfare and happiness of herself and the Marquis. Pleasure and gaiety, my dear Countess, are not synonymous: True affection is seldom very chearful. Yesterday, joyful as it undoubtedly was, passed without one scene of diversion. Tears involuntarily flowed from me; and yet I never spent a day of greater felicity. Of this extasy, which still continues, you, my dear, most assuredly must partake. I have extended this letter to an unusual length; but, from that knowledge I possess of your heart, I flatter myself it will not be tedious. Without such a knowledge, could my affection ever have been what it is?

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LETTER CXXXVII.

From the Marchioness de Roselle to Leonora.

Fernal, Aug. 28.

AS I am sensible, Miss, that those moments which are sorrowful are tedious, I take the first opportunity, in which my concern for your situation could be of any utility, to enter into some measures for your relief. Let not that character, in which I now appear, render me in your eyes an object of hatred or terror. If you will let me know what it is in my power to do for you, and will trust your case to me, I will endeavour to procure for you some method of life, by which you may spend your days in peace, honesty, and tranquillity ; but it must not be forgotten, that to the enjoyment of such a life some particular graces, of a spiritual nature, are required, which are not promiscuously bestowed ; and I should be very unwilling to lay you under any restraint. Favours, when unwillingly received, cease to be favours. If that mode of life which I have proposed, in which an inward tranquillity and the love of virtue are no less necessary than a purity of manners, should be agreeable, I will venture to assure you of every thing you can wish for. But, on the contrary, if your mind

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is uninfluenced by the thoughts of futurity, if your disgust to a life of solitude is unsurmountable, I will not, by threatening to abandon you, force you to an unwilling concurrence with my proposal. By no means. If it is your choice to appear again publickly in the world, I will take upon myself the charge of your return to Paris, and of procuring assistance for you. An acceptance, however, of my first offer would fulfil my wishes of rendering you happy, by giving you a taste for the pleasures of virtue, a return to which is at no time unseasonable. There are some indiscretions to which pardon is refused by the men, even by those who have been the occasion of them; but the Supreme Being, whose indulgence is not thus confined, always grants a generous forgiveness to sincere repentance. Cast yourself on him, and I shall be satisfied. I beg that you will seriously reflect on what I have written, and will transmit me an answer; for which purpose I leave you a week to decide. I have nothing more at heart than to be instrumental to your happiness.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

*From Leonora to the Marchioness de Roselle.**Bains, Aug. 28.*

ALAS! Madam, can it be the Marchioness de Roselle, who deigns thus to interest herself in the sufferings of an unhappy woman, and to stoop even to a correspondence with her! Is it credible!—Tears interrupt me.—At what moment could I have had the idea, that you, Madam, would ever have held out to me the hand of assistance? I will not attempt to express my gratitude, which no words can describe. Yet it is not my own wretchedness, nor your relief, which thus affects me. It is your goodness which awakens my sensibility. Is there a heart so abandoned as to withhold adoration from Virtue, when introduced by you? Shall I, Madam, acknowledge the truth? Of virtue I had formed a very disagreeable notion; a notion that it was reserved, haughty, and inexorable; but I have now fallen in love with it: In you it is mild, compassionate, and irresistible; and it is in your presence alone I dare to pronounce the name.—How different such discourses of tenderness from those which I have been used to! Is there any need of reflection in sending

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my answer. No, Madam; a thought is sufficient: I cast myself at your feet, and commit my whole welfare to you. Do not suspect me of hypocrisy; if I can ever be guilty of abusing your benefits, let me now renounce them: And if my future conduct shall, in any degree, extenuate the past — But, alas! how little acquainted am I with that virtue, which, from your example, I adore! The desire, however, of justifying your act of goodness, will overcome every difficulty. I am insensible to every object but you, and my heart is penetrated with gratitude. You have almost anticipated the favours of heaven; but of these I shall not be altogether unworthy, if I shall be found deserving of yours. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, &c. &c.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

From Madam de Narton to Madam de Saint Sever.

Fernal, Sept. 9.

WHAT, Madam, could you have guessed to be the first object of the Marchioness de Roselle's attention after her wedding? The
favour

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favour she has requested of the Marquis is, his concurrence in an act of benevolence; of benevolence to her rival, whom she has rescued both from misery and vice. An annuity of fifteen hundred livres has been assigned to Leonora, who is to retire to a convent at Nancy; and the manner in which the favour has been granted is an additional obligation. The Marquis, in complying with his lady's request, testified the most lively pleasure; but to Ferval, who could not forget the character and former conduct of Leonora, it did not appear in the same agreeable point of view. The motive, indeed, he commended; but he blamed the act; as tending too much to the encouragement of vice; and as it might be construed into an injury done to that part of mankind, who, though afflicted, are honest. To this Madam de Roselle replied, she had no intentions to offer this proceeding as a model to others, and confessed, that in this generosity her self-complacency was considerably flattered; that for this she hoped an excuse would be admitted; that the propriety or impropriety of benefits conferred could be determined only by the circumstances of them; that if they knew any honest person who yet stood in need of assistance, it would not be impossible to find

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out means of relief, and to repair that injury which her pity to Leonora had occasioned ; that if unhappily this example, by an ignorant construction, should be looked on as an encouragement to vice by some mind already resolved to embrace it, it should likewise be considered, that to convert from guilt is indisputably an act of virtue ; and that nothing is entirely exempted from inconveniences ; that she had transmitted to the Convent a favourable account of Leonora, whom she hoped an ambition to keep up her character would induce to a regularity of conduct ; that, farther than this, she did not mean to offer her own judgment ; that she had simply solicited the Marquis to comply with her desire, and that he had concurred in it. Ferval, however, and in this we all agreed, obtained a promise, that if ever Leonora should quit the Convent without the consent of the Marquis, her annuity should cease. She has since been conducted to Nancy ; and tears of gratitude flowed from her during the journey.

Such, my dear friend, are the purposes to which your excellent sister sacrifices all her new-acquired advantages. She is impatient to embrace you, and to merit your friendship ; and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing her

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ber and the whole family. With respect to myself, as my affairs will not permit me to return to Paris till after Christmas, I must amuse myself in my solitude with the recollection of those delightful moments I have spent. When we meet, I shall more fully partake of the general joy. Meanwhile I can console myself with the reflection, that I was among the first who enjoyed this happy event, and that it is just that you, in your turn, should enjoy it likewise. As soon as I am disengaged you may depend on my return, when I hope we shall be able to consider ourselves as members of the same family, and partakers of the same felicity.

L E T T E R CXL.

From Mr. de Saint-Sever to Madam de Narton.

Paris, Nov. 1.

I Cannot, my dear friend, satisfy myself with merely acquainting you that our travellers are safely arrived, and are in perfect health; my situation requires somewhat more. Overjoyed and embarrassed as I am, I cannot resist the desire of returning thanks, with more sensibility than ever, for that inestimable present I have received from your hands; the acquisition

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of so adorable a relation as the Marchioness de Roselle. Her charms would suffer no diminution by the most severe comparison, and yet her virtues are sufficient even to dispense with her beauty. I contemplate her at every moment and in every circumstance, and I am constantly discovering fresh excellencies. She seems to have united every kind of good disposition in her own ; and her inclinations ever flow in perfect unison with those of the company she is with ; notwithstanding which, it is not the effect of art, it springs from native goodness alone. When I am with her, for instance, she assumes the air of affection and tenderness ; but with Mr. de Saint-Sever she is all gaiety ; she can join in the laugh, she can partake of the frolic, and be a principal contributor to the general merriment. No person can be readier to conform to circumstances merely temporary ; and ever since she has been with us, her behaviour has been always minutely pleasing to the circle around her. She has an air of diffidence, but it is a diffidence which is charming ; and, far from diminishing her gracefulness, it rather augments it. It interests us in her favour, without lessening our admiration ; and it is not in the least productive of any embarrassment. Amiable as
 she

she is, she is a stranger to presumption; her wish is to please, but not to shine. One advantage she possesses, indeed, over most of the ladies here, I mean that natural, unconstrained behaviour which is so universally applauded; as she is never fearful of betraying any air of rusticity, she never does betray it. I cannot forbear mentioning that esteem with which Madam de Ferval has inspired me; in public life she perfectly corresponds to that picture which you have drawn of her when on her own estate. Our conversation is much indebted to the young ladies, whom I would venture to offer as a model to the whole sex. Void of caprice and ill-nature, ever contented, ever expressing their gratitude for the least attention that is shewn them, they never presume to ask a favour, but rather consider themselves as ministers to the pleasures of others; and yet no assiduity for their welfare or pleasure is neglected by their mother. This last circumstance must encrease our applause of their conduct; but they have undoubtedly been taught, that maternal care cannot always be at hand, and that a time may come when the world shall neglect them.

Here, Madam, Mr. de Saint-Sever, who has been leaning over me to peruse what I
have

have written, desires I will relinquish the pen in his favour. I return, therefore, to the ladies, and leave him to conclude the epistle. Adieu. ——— *

“ Upon my honour, Madam, I have fallen in love with my new sister, her mother, her sisters, and the whole family. The young ladies have not in company the least constraint or embarrassment, and you would be quite charmed to see us together. Then as to Madam de Ferval, she is a woman whose behaviour is at once noble and affable. I know not how she manages it, but so it is, and she commands esteem. I am very certain that some of our more elegant ladies, if ceremony and affectation can be called elegance, have found out a world of deficiencies in our country beauties; but they have not ventured to speak out. They have hitherto applauded them. And Valville — he has been two or three times at the Marquis’s door; but matters had been taken care of so well, that he could not get admittance; and yet his desire of seeing Madam de Roselle was so great, that he could almost have attempted to break through the guard. How-

* The remaining part of this letter was written by Mr. de Saint-Sever.

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ever, he was obliged to make his retreat from that quarter, and content himself with a sight of her at the opera, where he could not help acknowledging *she was pretty; upon honour she was pretty*. Having, through the medium of others, paid his homage to Madam de Roselle's beauty, he a second time attempted the Marquis's door with the same success. *It is a pity; she's not amiss; a pretty girl enough, and I should not have insulted the Marquis's choice. But this is ceremony. This is to be a woman of fashion. What can the poor thing think of it? I cannot help pitying her. Roselle is jealous, and is going, I suppose, to exclude her from all good company, and to make his wife as great a recluse as his sister. Poor child! I dare say it will be quite an angel, quite a Madam de Saint-Sever; a pretty piece of furniture!* You will readily imagine that we think ourselves grossly affronted by such expressions; but Madam de Roselle is endeavouring to prevail on her husband to overlook them, as unworthy his notice. She is certainly a very extraordinary woman. Would you think it? We have neither seen nor heard of one milliner, jeweller, nor any of the usual train which are thought to constitute the principal felicity of young married folks, and to be
 be

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be the mortification of their dependents. Every bargain has been made with such secrecy and expedition, that I never knew any thing about it till it was over. There is, besides, another circumstance that charms me; it is said that Madam de Roselle always thinks every thing too good when she is purchasing for herself, but just the contrary when she is bargaining for others. What say you to this? Yet such women as these are set little account by, especially in this part of the world. I really do not imagine a woman here could persuade herself she was fairly married, if she was to be deprived of the usual retinue and confusion. In short, here is not the least appearance of a wedding, unless it be that satisfaction which is visible on every countenance; and in which we are all equal partakers. If we could have recalled our youth, our joy could not have been greater. I return my most sincere acknowledgments for the inestimable present you have made me, for which I can make no other return than the assurances of that attachment, gratitude, and respect, with which I remain, &c. &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R C X L I :

*From Madam de Narton to Mr. and Madam
de Saint-Sever.*

Varennés, Nov. 15.

YOU can hardly conceive my joy at the sentiments you entertain for Madam de Roselle and her family. Prepared as I thought myself, they affected me in the most lively manner. I take a pride in thinking of the part I sustained in this happy event. I will not interrupt your pleasures by a relation of the disagreeable circumstances which detain me here. Your time is now passing agreeably ; and those moments which are agreeable are precious. But I flatter myself I shall soon be able to enjoy the company of those good friends who supply to me the want of a family. I have enclosed a letter directed to the Marquis. It came from Leonora, whose present mode of life is really exemplary : I am impatient to know what this letter contains. Such and so great is the empire of Benevolence and Virtue. Accept every compliment I can bestow. I intreat Mr. de Saint-Sever to take the trouble of presenting my respects to the ladies.

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L E T T E R CXLII.

*From the Marquis to Madam de Narton.**Madam,**Paris, Nov. 20.*

AS you are by no means a stranger to my sensibility, and the value of that obligation I have received at your hands, I need not express my gratitude, to which love and a sensation of happiness have communicated their enthusiasm. Will you not be surprized to hear, that I have still a favour to request of you, in relation to the Marchioness? Her behaviour is so reserved and so submissive, that it both humiliates and distracts me. You know her heart, and I know my own. Can I do otherwise than implicitly follow her inclination? Are there men to be found so uncivilized as not to perceive, that by a superiority of talents, wit, reason, and virtue, heaven hath vested in women those privileges, which they themselves so frequently usurp with cruelty and injustice? Accept the most affectionate homage of those happy persons which you have made so, and of all who are interested in their welfare. I have the honour to send you Leonora's letter, which is a subject of great exultation to the Marchioness. We shall with impatience wait the moment in
which

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which your presence will complete our felicity.

L E T T E R CXLIII.

From Leonora to the Marquis.

Nancy, Nov. 13.

AS the obligations, Sir, which you have conferred on me, necessarily require a return of homage on my part, deign to receive the effusions of a gratitude incapable of diminution or end. From that knowledge I have of your heart, I am persuaded you will learn with pleasure the effect which has been produced in me, by your goodness and that of the Marchioness de Roselle.

To her generous sollicitude alone I stand indebted for that reformation which hath been brought about in me. From the first moment in which she was pleased to interest herself in my welfare, I was sensible of the greatness of her virtues, and conceived the most lively regret at my own demerits. Her indulgent goodness hath effected that which the most bitter reproaches never could accomplish, the discovery to myself of the ignominy of my former conduct. The discovery was terrible ;
but

but the terror was not the terror of despair. Considering your excellent lady as an angel descended from the celestial regions, I cast myself into her arms; and her attention to me, by procuring that happiness which in my present habitation I now enjoy, raised the curtain of Deception, and presented Virtue to my view in all her splendor. My gratitude is, in particular, inexpressible for one advantage which her benevolence has obtained for me, the enjoyment, in so valuable an asylum, of a respect which, had my life been known, would never have been paid me. My greatest dread, before I came hither, arose from an expectation of being treated with that contempt which I justly deserve. But the regard which is shewn me is become my punishment. A comparison of those virtues which I now have before me, with the vices into which I had before been plunged, hath caused an inward emotion which cannot be described; and to such powerful motives to repentance another hath likewise been added, the melancholy recollection of the death of Juliet. Fear and terror had almost overwhelmed me; but these have now yielded to milder sensations. Heaven hath at length restored me to a state of tranquillity, which
hath

hath enabled me not only to perceive the extent of its present favours, but likewise to hope for still greater ; the means of obtaining which shall be the study of my remaining days. My illness, however, which, notwithstanding every assistance, still continues, gives me reason to think, that my iniquities have shortened my life : Yet how great is my happiness, if such an atonement will be accepted !

I am not ignorant, that this relation would appear with great propriety addressed to the Marchioness, as it is to her goodness my reformation must be ascribed. But arguments yet stronger have engaged me to express my gratitude immediately to you, to whom honour obliges me to make every confession, however ignominious. My first duty is, to throw off every disguise, and to discover the unworthiness of her, whom you would once have ventured to have called your wife. If ever you should have a child so unhappy as to fall a prey to the snares of a girl like Leonora, read to him my letter. He will there find, that avarice alone dictated the most tender expressions ; that no affection existed on my part ; that, prostituted almost from my infancy, my heart was unsusceptible of a sentiment of delicacy ; that I should not have

hesitated to have betrayed you for a rival more rich or more prodigal ; that, before I seduced you, I had been equally treacherous to others, young as yourself, who were led away by the inticement of pleasure, whose manners I corrupted, and whose fortunes I consumed ; and that, attentive to the progress of your passion, I had recourse to intrigue and hypocrisy, and by these arts had almost prevailed on you to consent to a public marriage. I reflect on this last circumstance as my greatest guilt, altho' I had many precedents in my favour, in which the hand of Authority ought surely to have interposed. How great a friend did you find in Mr. de Ferval, who first discovered my intentions, and afterwards exposed his own life to preserve yours from shame and misery ! He had almost fallen a victim to his honest zeal. Yet to me such an event would hardly have occasioned a serious thought. I considered bloodshed as a fresh homage paid to my charms ; the murder of two rivals, who had once perhaps been friends, was only an additional triumph of Beauty ; and, independently of the dread of that punishment which justice would have inflicted, nothing gave me more pleasure than the thoughts of a duel. This was the only sentiment which occupied me in those
terrible

terrible circumstances which custom had familiarized. Caprice or fancy might by chance attach me to some wretch abandoned as myself, to whom my own baseness would be less disguised ; and of this my connection with Bizac is too evident a proof : But a virtuous heart, a soul endowed with a greatness of sentiment, were not formed to affect me. My inclination was never directed to you, nor would it have been to any man of honour. He who is ensnared is not the object beloved. I never reflected on your tenderness as on an amiable quality ; I considered it only as a weakness, and as an opportunity to impose on you. My only motive for refusing your presents was the ambition of becoming your wife ; and those appearances of disinterestedness, generosity, and gratitude, which I displayed in your presence, were secret means, invented by Vice, to counterfeit Virtue, and seduce her. Such was the character of that creature, to whom, unworthy as she was, no sacrifice would have been refused.

Truth obliges me to acknowledge, that the chagrin I underwent, after the rupture between us, arose solely from not having pursued the surest means of attaching you to me. If we had proceeded so far in our amour that

any living pledge of our passion had existed, no means would have been neglected on my part to have taken the utmost advantage of it. From me, perhaps, all esteem would have been withdrawn; and the passion you once entertained might have been changed into disgust; yet no dishonour would have appeared to result from paternal affection; the tender caresses of an infant, requesting permission to call you his father, would have been irresistible; and a child, instructed by me in all the refinements of deceit, would have obtained that from your affection, which your reason would have refused. Reflect, sir, in what light you would have been viewed by the witnesses of my ignominy. Could you ever have endured their presence, or that of your own relations? Ever despised, obliged either to withdraw from society, or to suffer continual mortifications, and at last overcome with shame, you could have expected in death alone a period to your troubles. Tremble at the thought of that abyss into which I would have plunged you.

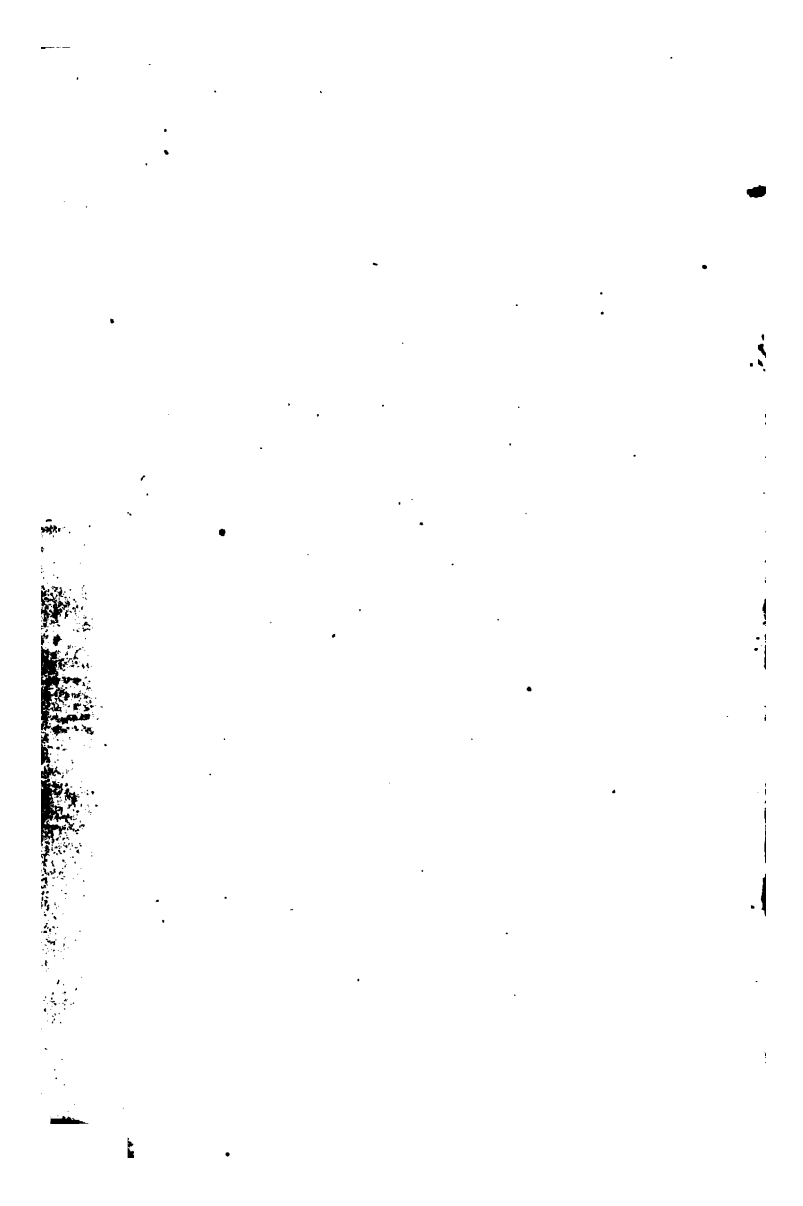
Nothing less than the united sentiments of remorse, gratitude, and virtue; that virtue, of which you pointed out the path, could have occasioned this declaration. Accept my sincerest

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cerest wishes, that you may enjoy, in its utmost purity, that happiness which hath been reserved for you, and congratulate yourself on your deliverance from the connection you had so nearly formed with me ; a deliverance so much the greater, as the consequence of it hath been, the acquisition of the most amiable and most virtuous of women. With a heart overflowing with gratitude for your favours, and with sorrow for my own offences, if I may yet be permitted to supplicate Heaven in behalf of mankind, I will never cease to implore every blessing upon you and upon the Marchioness de Roselle ; and this will be the most agreeable employment during the remainder of a life, of which the last moment is approaching.

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